

**SCARLET
RIDERS
...
CAMPBELL**

SCARLET RIDERS



CAPT. W^m. CAMPBELL

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THE SCARLET RIDERS



A STORY OF THE ROYAL
CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Captain William Campbell
Author of "Arctic Patrols"

*Billy Adams
For a rainy
afternoon
Randolph Martin*

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THE SCARLET RIDERS

CHAPTER I

THE BLEMMER GANG

LISTEN, fellows. This is the kind of a night we've been waiting for. It's pitch dark except once in a while when it lightnings, and the rain is coming down in torrents. Get busy!"

"Okay, Rusty," spoke up his trusted lieutenant, answering Rusty Blemmer, gangster chief. The record of this man as an all-round bad man and ruthless killer was known throughout the country.

"We need two cars. Big cars. Get them! We ought to be able to make the Twin Cities in thirty hours and it won't be long before we will be across the border into Canada." Rusty spoke firmly and with conviction.

"Canada?" queried Lefty, Red, Gyp, and Butch in great surprise.

"Yeah, Canada. You heard me the first time. This country's getting too hot for us since Butch shot that copper in Evansville. I have the plans all set. Get the cars, get back here as soon as you get 'em. Red, you stay with me and we'll pack up and get all marks destroyed. An' hurry up!"

The three gangsters as a preliminary precaution put out the little light in the room they occupied

at the moment, then cautiously opened the street door and peered out into the darkness. There was not a street light burning in the little suburb of the great city. Softly they went out onto the porch and closed the door, and then disappeared down the street.

The men had been in hiding. For weeks they had been hunted, first for a robbery that had netted them fifty thousand dollars of the bank's funds, and then when Butch had slain the policeman, who had attempted to stop the men for questioning, the search had extended from one end of the country to the other.

Lefty had lived in Oakhurst at one time and knew the suburb well. He also knew that the Custer home was occupied only in the winter time, the Custer family spending their summers at a lake resort. "If that house is empty now, and it should be at this time of the year, we'll have a swell hide-away," Lefty had told his chief. And when they reached Oakhurst, the house was unoccupied. It took but a short time for the gangsters to enter, even though doors and windows were heavily barred and locked. They found no food, but did find many other advantages. The matter of food during their stay at the Custer home was taken care of easily by making short trips into the country after dark and making purchases at wayside stores. Sometimes they stole their supplies. The life irked the men. It is not easy to sit quietly day after day in a small house, inactive, knowing that at any moment the officers of the law might swoop down seeking their prey.

Now, the very kind of a night they had been waiting for came. A dark, rainy night, when there would be little travel on the highways and little opportunity of being seen and recognized, or suspected as being members of the much-wanted Blemmer gang. Blemmer had, during the days of confinement, laid plan after plan to escape and get into a comfortable hide-out where they would be able to move about. As fast as one plan was completed, he discarded it for one reason or another, until at last he recalled a trip into northern Canada years before when a young man. He recalled the wide open spaces, where one might travel days on end without coming in contact with a human being; there indeed would they be safe. There they could hunt, fish, trap until such a time as they could safely make their way into Alaska, then to South America, anywhere. It mattered little where they went, so long as he was sure he had his bodyguards, and enough money to last for a long time to come.

Blemmer and Red quickly prepared their effects for removal to the cars. They carefully wiped every glass and cup they had used and removed every trace left by them in the house. Their effects were not many, a couple of machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, ammunition, and a little clothing. The task done, the two gangsters went into the front room of the house, put out the light, which at all times was shielded by heavy drapes over the windows, and

awaited the arrival of the three others who were bringing the two cars. An hour passed. Blemmer was becoming worried.

"It's time they showed up."

"Yeah, sure is. Suppose somethin's happened to 'em?"

"Never can tell, but the three of them can handle any flatfoot that ever pounded a beat."

"Sure, but what if they run into a gang of 'em?"

"Keep quiet! I've got the jitters now."

"Maybe we'd better beat it, Chief."

"Quiet! I wish Butch was here; I'd be ready for anything."

"Sure, that's it. Always Butch. You ain't got guts enough to fight alone. Got to have Butch to do your dirty work."

"I'll put you on the spot, you cur."

"Yeah? — Say, Rusty, all that keeps the gang together now is the fact you've got the dough an' Butch would kill any of us if we tried tuh git it."

"Oh, so that's it, huh? Well, we'll take care of you mugs when the time comes. And if — "

From down the street could be heard the purring of two cars. They moved slowly, due to the wet pavement. Two minutes later the cars ordered were in front of the house and five minutes later, Butch, Gyp, and Rusty pulled away from the curb in the first car, and the two other men followed immediately in the second car.

"Now listen you and listen carefully." It was Blemmer speaking. For two days he and his men had been hidden in a stretch of woods in northern Minnesota. Their flight had been a strain on all the men; one car was wrecked and it was necessary for the five to ride in the same car, a most dangerous thing to do, because the Blemmer gang was known to consist of five men, and every car containing that number was sure to be stopped, or at least an attempt made. That would mean either capture or a battle, neither of which was desired by the gang. They sought freedom. Later they stole another car, and changed the license plates with those taken from the wrecked car and managed to complete the journey until within about fifty miles of the Canadian border. Fearful of entering Canada with the cars, and knowing that to abandon them so far north would be a sure indication to the police that the gang sought refuge in Canada, the cars were deliberately driven off a high bank into a deep river. The men then walked many weary miles at night, sleeping in any refuge by day, until at last they came to a large woods, where they rested and made final plans for their weary entry into Canada.

"Go on Chief, what's up this time?" asked Red.

"We're going to split here. Butch and I will travel together, you others will travel singly. There's a railroad depot not far from here, I've heard the trains whistle for it every three or four hours. Red, find that depot and get a timetable with a map. Get a

Canadian Pacific or Canadian National timetable, then I'll show you the routes each will take."

"All right," said Red and he left on his mission.

"Keep your eyes on Red," said Blemmer, "he's a little too smart to suit me."

"What's up?" asked one of the men.

"You'll know when the time comes. I have a special job for him when we get settled in Canada otherwise I'd have bumped him off before this."

An hour later Red returned with the timetable and a small supply of food. The village was a quiet one, with but a general store, a grain elevator and a handful of houses for the railroad section men. He had seen or heard nothing of interest to them. He had not been talked to; had given his order to the storekeeper, remarking he was beating his way by freight to Michigan, paid his bill and left. Aside from asking for the timetable at the station, there was little conversation.

"Looks okay here, then. But we must light out as soon as we get our plans laid. Look here. There's Canada." Blemmer was speaking, the timetable map spread out before him.

"Sure," spoke up Butch, "but where in Canada do we light?"

"Say, what's the idea of us splittin' up anyway? You've got all the swag, an' if we split the gang, we split the dough."

"Hold on there, Lefty. I'm still chief of this gang, and I split when the time comes, and I say when, not you."

"Yeah," spoke up Butch, "an' look at this. When I pulls the trigger, it hits what I'm pointin' at. See?"

There was quiet for a few minutes. Every man, even Blemmer, was afraid of Butch. He had been friend and ally of Blemmer for more than five years, ever since Blemmer befriended Butch after he had escaped from the police, badly wounded. Both men were cowards at heart, but with one or two others, they possessed a rattish type of bravery. Blemmer, however, seldom carried a gun of any kind. He was shrewd enough to realize that if he were caught, the fact that he had no record of carrying a gun, would stand him in good stead. Butch was willing enough to do all the shooting, in fact sometimes seemed to be altogether too willing to suit Blemmer, and so far as that one crime was concerned, Blemmer was out of it. In fact, rarely did he ever do any of the real criminal work, aside from furnishing the brains and acting as the head of the gang, its adviser, ruler, mediator; yet he shared two to one in the division of the spoils, a working agreement that so far had been agreeable to all the men.

"Look at this, you guys. Look where I'm pointing." Blemmer's voice was commanding.

"Yeah, we're lookin'," was the unified response.

"That is Emerson. Over here is North Portal. See?"

"Sure."

"Now over here, about ten miles from this town of Spencer, is a woods. I remember the place because several years ago my father and I visited a farmer

near there. That is where we are going to meet. If the old farmer is still living, we'll get anything we want from him, if not, we'll have to figure out how to get supplies until we can make our way further north."

"Who goes which way?" asked Red.

"Butch and I are going by way of North Portal, that is, we will cross the line somewhere in that vicinity. You other men go by way of Emerson, but keep your eyes peeled, because there are always Mounties around there."

"The Mounties?" queried Gyp.

"Sure, those Royal Canadian Mounted Police," answered Blemmer, "and you'd better keep out of their sight. Nothing to be afraid of but we don't want any trouble. We want all our jack, and we have too much money and too many guns on us for that."

"When do we meet at Spencer?"

"Get there as soon as you can. We'll wait there for two weeks for the rest of the men."

"Say, Rusty, how about some grub?" Butch was speaking.

"Yeah, some grub," chimed in Red and Gyp.

"Unwrap that package Red brought back and we'll eat."

Red took from a paper bag several cans of food, butter, and bread which he had bought in the village, and spread the meal on a newspaper. Suddenly he cried:

"Look at this!"

"What's up?"

"Listen. The paper says: 'Fifty men are scouring the northern part of the state under the direction of Sheriff Noble for the five convicts who broke out of Stillwater Prison yesterday.' "

"Well, what of it?"

"Nuthin' 'cept the next line says 'They are concentrating their search in the vicinity of Ardmore.' That's the name of the town where I got this grub! It's just a little way from here."

"Say, we ain't no escaped cons."

"Quiet, you baboons," commanded Blemmer, "that's something to worry about. They may not be looking for us, but if they see us they will put us over the fire. We've got to get away from here quick and I don't mean maybe."

For a few minutes the men discussed the matter. It was late in the afternoon now, much too light though to make any attempt at getting out of the woods. They would have to wait until dark. One by one the men made known their plans, and finally it was agreed that in the event of separation, Butch and Blemmer would meet five miles west of North Portal, the others, five miles west of Emerson. Butch and Gyp wanted to shoot it out with the posse if they met, but the better judgment of Blemmer quieted that suggestion. They were in a little hollow in the center of the woods, where there was considerable underbrush, and could, by keeping quiet, remain quite safe and unseen unless a searching party should stumble upon them.

"Come on, eat." Blemmer spoke sharply. He wanted to be prepared for any emergency. He commanded them to be quiet, with no talking except in whispers until he gave orders to do otherwise. The meal was eaten in silence. Blemmer stopped even his lieutenant and killer, Butch, from smoking. All the men seemed nervous. They frequently looked at their watches, awaiting the coming of darkness when they might get away from the woods and gain their haven of rest, Canada.

The time dragged, but the gangsters noticed the day was drawing to a close. In a little while it would be dark enough to work their way out of the woods, and because they were forewarned, they were forearmed. Suddenly Blemmer said in a whisper:

"Sh-h-h-h-h. There's someone coming." The members of the gang became tense and still.

The crashing of men walking through brush in the woods became louder and louder and finally three men stopped within fifteen feet of where the gangsters were hidden. Then they heard:

"We'll make camp here, sheriff, if it's all the same to you."

"That's agreeable to me."

"That was a clever idea of yours, Sheriff Clayton. Placing three guards on each road and stringing out men on both ends of these woods."

"The only thing we could do, Mr. Phillips. The posse under the 'G' men looking for the Blemmer gang and my gang looking for the escaped convicts

are going to sew up the northern part of this state so tight none of them can get through.

"With three men guarding the east road, each a mile apart, and the same system on the west road, and a patrol of men between them, and with a line of guards on the north and another on the south side of the woods, we are able to stop anyone we wish going in any direction, and in case of trouble, a shot fired by any one guard, will be heard by the others."

"In other words, the convicts if they are still in this area, as at first supposed, cannot escape."

"Exactly, and if the Blemmer gang is in this vicinity, they are as good as caught right now. Queer thing that, their cars were traced as far as Foster-ville and were seen to drive through the village, but no record of cars or men has been reported since then and even the federal men cannot get a trace of them."

"Why do the 'G' men hang around here?"

"Orders. They aren't taking any chances. Oh, here's the cook and the men with the supplies. All right boys, set up your kitchen and get something for the guards. As soon as you're ready, we send them in five at a time until all are fed. Better have a few sandwiches made up for them to take along for a lunch."

The conversation continued, with the gangsters taking in every word. Their minds were busy. They were hemmed in by a posse and federal men who were looking primarily for escaped convicts, and not

alone for them, but if caught, their fate would be worse than that of the fleeing jailbirds.

By now it was quite dark. The crafty Blemmer, his brain ever alert when there was planning to do (providing it was something of a criminal nature or an escape), turned over plan after plan in his mind, and then, as if in answer to his question as how to get out of the woods and into the fields of tall grain where they would be safe at least for the present, he and his mates heard the sheriff say:

"Slim, better walk over to the men on guard on the north side of the woods, and have them come in for supper."

Blemmer nudged each of the men, and whispered directions, and in a moment, all were crawling away from the position they had held, and moved toward the north. When sure they could not be heard, they arose to their feet and slowly walked toward their freedom, the north side of the woods.

Walking through woods a distance of a mile is not a small matter especially at night when any noise one makes might lead to his capture. By the time they reached the edge of the woods, the man sent by the sheriff was already there, he having gone by way of the road. He was talking to the men about their meal:

"But those are the sheriff's orders, men."

"Wal, Slim, I reckon you can walk back to the sheriff as fast as you came. Just tell 'im that me an' the boys ain't goin' to do no hoofin' fer our grub.

Either he sends it to us or we go home an' put on the feed bags. How about it boys?"

"Right, Farmer Blodgett."

There was silence for a moment, then Slim walked back toward the camp. The guards chuckled and then spread out on duty again.

Here was something Blemmer's cohorts had not figured on. With guards on all sides of the woods, there was no chance for them to get away, and while Blemmer did not make his idea known to his men, he was firmly convinced that one reason for the guards about the woods was that as soon as it was light enough in the morning, a general search of the woods would be made. Something must be done at once. They could not be caught there. A battle was useless, they were outnumbered five to one at least. And then, crafty Rusty Blemmer, formulated a plan, a desperate one, but just the kind that had always gotten him out of trouble and was the reason he was able to command the respect of the thugs, murderers, and bank robbers, to say nothing of highjackers, who gladly followed him wherever he led.

CHAPTER II

THE ESCAPE

LISTEN Red," whispered Blemmer, "we're in a tight spot and it's up to you to help us out of it."

"What do you want?" inquired Red.

"These men guarding this end of the woods are farmers and town people, not policemen."

"Sure, I know that."

"What I intend to do couldn't be done with a flatfoot, but it's a scheme that'll work with these fellows. I've got it all figured out, and each man must do his share."

"Okay, what'll I do?"

"Go back through the woods about a quarter of a mile, then fire three or four shots. Not one after the other, but one, then two, and pause a second, and then a couple more. Understand?"

"Sure."

"These guards will all start running toward each other, because they will rush to help the other guards, thinking there is trouble in the direction the shot came from. See?"

"Sure."

"Butch and I will beat it toward the northwest, the

rest of you toward the northeast, and as soon as the guards are on the run, we'll beat it out of the woods and hide in the fields."

"I got yuh."

"You start running as soon as the last shot is fired. Make your way to where I told you, west of Emerson and meet Butch and me at the Spencer woods as soon as you can."

"All right, when do I start?" asked Red.

"Right away. Some of the men are eating, and perhaps some are on their way to their camp. Now is the time."

"All right, Rusty. I'm on my way."

Red started off, and Rusty Blemmer hastily explained the plan to the other gangsters.

Minutes passed. Blemmer was becoming worried. Something might have happened to his plan, he thought, when fifteen, twenty minutes passed without the shots being fired. Then, the air resounded; echoes were carried to the surrounding country as five shots were fired, and well timed they were, too; they sounded as if it was an exchange of shots between two men. Tensely the gangsters waited, and a couple of minutes later they could hear the guards running — their feet striking hard on the ground — then the gangsters made for the two northern corners of the woods, dividing as he had instructed.

Soon there was a great confusion, the noise of it coming from some distance away when the various guards from the different sections met. This noise soon faded though, because Blemmer and his men

had made good their escape, and before the matter had been straightened out by the sheriff, the gangsters were going through the fields, sheltered by the tall grain. Butch and Blemmer kept together. Butch was carrying a machine gun, and although it was one of the new, light types, became quite a burden after a couple of miles, but Blemmer refused to share the load. He considered the three revolvers and the ammunition he carried to be enough of a load for him.

All night long the men walked. They did not know exactly where they were, but they were going in the general direction of Canada. Time enough to find their whereabouts when they came to a farmhouse.

The others made their way without incident toward their meeting place near Emerson. It was not until they had crossed the border into Canada that their troubles began, but not so with Butch and Blemmer.

"Get down Butch," demanded Blemmer, and the two men dropped to the ground and were hidden from the near-by road. Two fast-moving automobiles sped past. For a week, no matter where they were, the gangster chief and his gunman had seen fast-moving automobiles filled with armed men passing up and down the roads. They found it impossible to go into any of the villages near where they walked, fearful of being arrested. They were careful when seeking food to stop at only the least pretentious

farmhouses. Both men were weary, hungry, and foot-sore. They knew they were still a long way from the Canadian border, and with little chance of arriving there in many days unless something turned up to enable them to ride. They could make but a few miles a day, they had to keep hidden so much of the time.

That day cars moved back and forth frequently, and it was decided not to attempt to move until after dark. For a while neither man could rest because of the sun beating down upon them, but Blemmer contrived a little tent made from their coats, and after a long time both men slept. They awoke just as the sun was setting, both of them feeling the pangs of thirst. Yet they dared not move, and only when at last it was dark did they leave their hiding place.

After walking about a half mile, they came to a little stream, and for the first time in days were able to wash themselves thoroughly, and to have all the water they wished to drink. Much refreshed, they set out in quest of food. A short way off, they saw a light shining from a farmhouse. Neither seeing or hearing anything on the road, the two men approached the farmhouse and asked for food from the man who opened the door. The request was granted.

"How far is it into town?" asked Blemmer of the farmer.

"Salem or Bangor?"

"Salem."

"Three miles, straight down the road. If you're going that way you may see some excitement."

"Show in town?"

"Yes, a good show. The posse is rounding up one of the most notorious gangs ever on the loose in this country. The Blemmer gang, you've heard of them?"

"Seems to me I have," replied Blemmer.

"They've been traced to this part of the state. Seems there were five of 'em. They've escaped the posses and 'G' men several times, but this time they've got 'em."

"Say, that's great. How did it happen?" Blemmer was anxious to know all the details.

"Wal, seems like a posse chasing some escaped convicts were hiding out in some woods. They got caught, they always do. Then one of the men told the sheriff he had seen an old enemy, Rusty Blemmer, two days before heading this way. Name's Dingy Slater."

"What?" The startled Blemmer for once lost control of himself and called out.

"Stick 'em up, quick both of you," commanded the farmer. And then, "Sam, come here," he called to his son who lived alone with the old man.

While the startled Blemmer and Butch raised their hands at the command of the farmer who held a revolver in his hand, the farmer's son entered the room.

"Phone the village I've got Blemmer and one of his men."

"Okay, dad," said the youth and he left the room.

"Don't try anything on me, Blemmer. I've got you covered and I can shoot and I'll shoot to kill. There's a price on your head."

"You're mistaken, sir. I'm not Blemmer."

"Tell that to the sheriff when he comes."

"I got 'em dad. They'll be right over."

"Surely, you don't want us, two innocent men, thrown in jail."

"If you're innocent you won't go to jail."

As usual Blemmer's mind was working fast. They must get out of this and make good their escape. A moment later the telephone bell rang, the farmer turned his head for just the fraction of a second, but that fraction was enough. Butch's knee knocked over the table, and the lamp fell to the floor, and so did both men, feeling sure the farmer would shoot — and shoot he did, in the direction of where Blemmer had been sitting. In a second almost, Blemmer was upon the man, had his gun away from him, and had knocked him senseless with the butt of it. Butch in the meantime had thrown himself on the son and was beating him unmercifully. He arose and faced Blemmer.

"Come on, Chief, use your head. Phone the sheriff," he cried.

"Too late, I hear them coming now."

"That car's coming the other way. Phone the sheriff, you big hunka yellow, that we're not the Blemmer gangsters."

Blemmer ran toward the telephone. It was one

chance in a million to escape. He asked central for the sheriff's office — the sheriff answered.

"Not the man Blemmer, eh?"

"No, sorry I made the mistake sheriff," answered Blemmer.

"Well, tell the boys to bring the gents in anyway. Keep 'em covered. Boys'll be there any minute now."

"Quick, out the back door and take a powder," commanded Blemmer (which meant to make a hasty escape). A moment later the two fugitives were hurrying down the road. They saw two cars and dropped to the ground beside the road and watched the lights of the car as it turned into the farmyard.

"Only chance, Butch, is that there's a railroad running through town. We'll catch the first rattler out."

"Keep to the west of town, Rusty."

"Sure, to the west, until we catch the railroad line running north into Canada."

"An' say, those mugs'll phone the sheriff an' they'll send more cars. We'll be caught between two gangs."

"Yeah? Butch, I work too fast for you. I cut the wires of the telephone before we left."

"But they'll start searchin'."

"Over the road. We'll beat it toward the west side of town and then we'll —"

From a distance a shrill locomotive whistle was heard. It came from the east.

"Run, Butch, there's our chance. If it's a freight

we'll catch it all right, if it's a passenger, we'll have no chance at all."

The men ran as best they could, hampered by their machine gun which Blemmer was now willing to help carry. Soon a car was heard speeding down the road toward the village. Evidently someone was going to report to the sheriff; the other men would search the vicinity of the farm for clues as to the direction the gangsters had taken.

The train drew closer and closer to the village. By the sound of the locomotive, it was pulling a heavy train, and as it drew up the grade to the village, the gangsters noticed that the locomotive labored. There could be no mistaking the sound — it was a freight train moving slowly because of its heavy load and a steep incline. The men ran faster. If they could but make that train! They were panting from their exertion, and still had a long way to go. They ran into a fence, clambered over it and down a bank, and up another and found they were on the tracks of the railroad which turned south just after passing through the village.

"Luck." It was Butch.

"Yeah, luck! Get over on the other side. There are trees over there. We'll lay low until the engine passes. We don't want the engine crew to see us. That's a bright headlight."

The men lay on the ground resting, until after the engine passed. The train was still moving slowly. Near the front end of the train was a gondola car,

and seeing this, the two men ran beside the train, caught the ladder on the side of the gondola and were soon aboard. But Blemmer did not like the idea of riding in the open. He was aware that the entire country would be searching for him. He examined the end of the box car behind the gondola. There was a door — it was sealed. But Blemmer had ridden freight trains before, and with the aid of the barrel of his revolver, pried the door from the track without destroying the seal, and a few minutes later, Butch and Blemmer were riding toward the west, hidden from view in a car half filled with merchandise. Blemmer lit a match to read the markings on some of the cases.

“Butch, look at this.”

“Edmonton, Alberta. What of it?”

“Butch, this car is loaded with goods for Edmonton — Edmonton is in Canada.”

“Yeah, but youse said there’s a stretch in the stir fer ridin’ in merchandise cars.”

“Sure, and we are going to be ready for that. This car must be going by way of Portal. That means, we get out as soon as we leave Fargo.”

“An’ how da you know when that is?”

“Every time the train stops we’ll listen, and we’ll get wise to where we are all right. I’ve been in this country before, besides I’ve been studying the maps and the timetables, Butch.”

Soon the train was atop the hill and had started downgrade. It made fast time. From the many towns passed through, it was evident the train was a time

freight. Luck once more played into the hands of Blemmer.

Some hours later, after making but a few stops, the train pulled into a large town, as was evident from the noise of several switch engines; the men in the merchandise car could hear the yardmen and checkers going back and forth beside the train, and Blemmer was convinced they were in Fargo — and it was daylight. The car was switched about a time or two, and finally the side door was opened. Hidden behind boxes and bales, the two men could not be seen. Freight was removed, more freight put in. As the trucksters worked, they talked — they talked about the escape of two gangsters and what they would do if *they* caught the men who killed men ruthlessly and just the night before had slugged two innocent people, one a farmer who was in a serious condition and the other his son who was dead. Blemmer learned that the car was going through to Edmonton that night. For three or four hours the car door was opened, and then it was closed and sealed and switched away from the freight house. Without ventilation, and the car standing in the hot sun, the two men suffered greatly — they were hungry and thirsty — but they had their freedom, or at least they were not in jail. After what seemed ages, darkness fell. It had been quiet for some time. Most likely the car was on some sidetrack waiting for the Canadian train to be made up. Then the car was moved to another track — there was a great deal of switching. An hour or so later, Blemmer

heard two blasts of a locomotive whistle, used as an answer from the engineer to the signal from a trainman, and the train started to move. As soon as the train seemed to have passed out of town, Blemmer opened the door of the car. It was very dark. There was not a light anywhere. The train was moving too fast then to drop off but half an hour later it slowed down and the two men dropped from the car to the ground.

Resting until daybreak beside the railroad track, the two men hid their machine gun in a culvert and went in search of food. By explaining to the farmer they were looking for jobs until the harvest season, and expressing no interest in the great news of the day, the slugging of the two farmers, aside from a general indication they had heard of the news in Fargo, they aroused no suspicion. The two men were given a hearty breakfast, and allowed to clean up — the first time in days. Their clothes were torn, their shirts dirty; nothing like the former immaculate attire Blemmer and his gang always wore.

By adroit questioning, Blemmer drew from the farmer information he badly needed, how far they were from the Canadian border — how it was patrolled and the like.

"Friend of mine named Foster tried to cross the border once with some produce. He paid plenty too," the farmer laughed. "He said everywhere he looked there was a Mountie. Wal, he finally got across at night, but no sooner had his puddle-jumper landed in Canedy then a Mountie grabbed

'im. They tuk his produce an' fined 'im fifty smack-ers." Again the farmer laughed. Butch and Blemmer joined in but their laughter lacked a hearty ring.

The food, rest, and cleanup worked wonders on the two men. Butch was ready for anything, and Blemmer was again his crafty self, his mind devolving plans to cross the border safely. When they left the farmer two hours later, the old man thought he had lost two friends.

Blemmer's plan was a bold one. They took to the open highway after Butch got his machine gun and "thumbed" their way. The case containing the machine gun was explained as being their suitcase. They traveled slowly, ate regularly, and slept whenever the notion took possession of them. They had fifty thousand dollars, but because of the big bills, they could not venture to cash them in anything save a large city and then only under most favorable conditions. Aside from their torn clothing the men were exceptionally well taken care of. One night they arrived at a town close to the border. There was a dance, and in front of the hall several cars were parked, some showing Canadian license plates. Selecting one car that suited his fancy, Blemmer jumped in with Butch, and they drove away. They crossed the border without difficulty. At last they were where they wanted to be — they felt secure. All that remained now was to make Spencer and the woods there where they would await the arrival of the rest of the gang. Finally abandoning

the car, they set out for Spencer on foot. Fearful of being seen during the day, they traveled at night, begging food as they went. Three weeks later, they arrived at Spencer woods, tired, but pleased. They had eluded the police, and now they would fool the Canadian police and live in peace and comfort.

CHAPTER III

GUARDIANS TO THE NORTH

EDMONTON, Alberta, is the headquarters of "G" Division of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which patrols a vast area extending from the international boundary to the North Pole. It is in this division that many of the Force's most spectacular battles with crime have been fought, battles that meant overcoming bitter cold and Arctic blizzards and dealing with Eskimos and Indians. Here also the slogan to "get your man" is carried out to the letter, no matter where the chase may lead to nor under what hardships the policeman must work.

Police detachments are scattered throughout "G" Division, just as in any other, but nowhere in the Dominion do men of the "Force" meet such varied conditions both as to climate and people.

On this autumn day, the sun shining down upon the police headquarters with its gaunt buildings, offices, dormitories, and stables, brightened the peaceful surroundings. Policemen assigned to various tasks were working quietly and briskly. The officers gave their orders in quiet, firm tones as men who had been trained to command and knew

how to temper their demands with the language and quiet tones of a gentleman. There was precision and definiteness in the activity of the men showing the good grace of order.

The policeman on duty at the telephone frequently glanced out of the window near his desk. Being an out-of-doors man, it was not pleasant to be cooped up in an office. He wished for more active duty. The commanding officer, Inspector Walter Brooks, was also a little weary of his office routine, and inwardly craved the far northern stretches where he had served and where his heart yet remained.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning. The day's mail had been attended to — the day's orders issued. Men on detachment or special duty had reported their location and whatever other information was deemed necessary, and now there was little to do but wait — wait until some orders would come in from Regina or Ottawa bearing an unusual report.

Inspector Brooks had a knack for being able to fit the right man in the right place and gave each job to its best man. He knew the strong points and the weakness of every man — he knew those who were inclined to be satisfied when a prisoner was brought in and properly charged with a crime, and those who went to the bottom of every case and when the trial took place had every detail worked out to the minutest findings of the clues they had run down.

This was a lazy morning for the Inspector. He wanted a canter, and was just about to order his personal riding horse brought from the stable, when the telephone bell rang.

"A call from Regina, Inspector."

"All right put him on." There was a pause, and then:

"Hello. Inspector Brooks?"

"Yes, Adjutant."

"Go through your files and locate everything you have on the Blemmer gang. I have word from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington that the gang is most likely in Canada."

"I've been looking the files over ever since the papers have had so much to say about them, but find very little here."

"I'll send you detailed reports by messenger at once. This is a most important matter. The plane should arrive right after lunch. Good-by."

"Good-by, sir."

"Hum," mused the Inspector, "Blemmer gang, huh? Well, if they're in Canada, we'll show them something, but how did they ever get away from those 'G' men, that's what I'd like to know. Capable, fearless, those F.B.I. boys. Something wrong somewhere when they didn't get them."

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in," called the Inspector. The door opened and a tall, pleasant-faced, good-looking young policeman entered, halted, clicked his heels and saluted. "I beg to report, sir."

"Be seated Corporal Hughes. When did you return?"

"Just now, sir. The train was a little late."

"And what did you learn at Fletcher, Corporal?"

"Not as much as you would like, sir. I located the man whose car was stolen on the other side of the line. He was at a dance and when he came out the car was gone. Later one of our men found it abandoned forty miles from Fletcher. At Spencer I learned very little except that ten days ago a stranger drove up to the general store in great haste, bought some meat and groceries and drove away toward the north. The storeman could not remember the kind of car or any other details."

"Did you make any inquiries among the farmers?"

"Yes sir. The only strangers they have seen was a man named Winbrooke. He called at the Smythe farm about ten days ago. Mr. Smythe knew this man and his father a number of years ago. Aside from that, there is nothing to report, sir."

"Very well, Corporal Hughes. That is all."

"Yes sir," and Hughes arose, clicked his heels, saluted and left the room.

It remained the same during the rest of the morning. One man after another to report on some special assignment or other and in no case was the report anything of apparent value, yet the Inspector kept note of each and all.

It was about three o'clock when the plane arrived from Regina with the messenger and the Blemmer

files. The Inspector at once started to read the papers to acquaint himself with the facts in the case. The reports were all from the United States, there was nothing to indicate that the gang had ever been in Canada, and yet that most efficient head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation insisted the men were in Canada. Finally, glancing through the papers a second time, Inspector Brooks came upon a newspaper clipping he had paid no attention to before. He glanced at it again, and was about to pass it by, when he wisely concluded the paper had some value or it would not be in the file. He read the clipping which began with the headline:

BLEMNER FREED AGAIN! ALIBI IRONCLAD!

Oscar (Rusty) Blemmer was freed in the criminal court again today. His alibi proved to be ironclad. He was able to account for every minute of his time on the night of September 28th from five to ten o'clock. The robbery of the messenger and the murder of his guard took place at seven o'clock. Blemmer who has been under suspicion many times, and often questioned, has never had a sentence handed him, although the police are positive he has been the brains of, and participated in many of the outstanding crimes for the past seven years. "Dingy" Slater did not fare so well as Blemmer. He drew the maximum and was sentenced to Stillwater penitentiary. It is believed Blemmer gave valuable information to the police regarding Slater while under questioning. District Attorney Edwards tried without success to prove that Blemmer's real name is Oscar Winbrooke. Blemmer was released from custody.

"Oho. Winbrooke, Winbrooke, where did I —

oh, yes, the man Hughes reported as visiting the Smythe farm," mused the Inspector, "and Blemmer is supposed to be in Canada — and there have been a few minor robberies lately, that's not in Blemmer's line, evidently, but —"

The Inspector picked up his telephone. "Locate Sergeant Ian Parker and have him report to me at once. Cancel all leaves. No man is to leave the barracks without my special permission."

Little by little the entire story unfolded in the mind of the trained, efficient policeman — he could see it all now — the escaped Slater wanting revenge and letting the "G" men know he had seen Blemmer — the stolen car crossing back into Canada — the petty larcenies around Spencer and the towns a few miles away. Brooks arose and walked into the outer office just as Sergeant Parker entered.

"I have orders to report to you, Inspector."

"Go into my office and wait for me. Orderly, find Corporal Hughes. He is to report to me at once."

"Yes sir."

The Inspector joined Sergeant Parker in his private office.

"Sergeant, know anything about the Blemmer gang, ever hear of it?"

"Yes sir, but limited to newspaper accounts."

"It is believed the gang is in Canada and I have an idea they are in the vicinity of Spencer. I want you to go over there with Corporal Hughes and make a thorough search for those men. Incidentally, there is a farmer over there named Smythe who has

a friend named Winbrooke, and that is the name the District Attorney in the States believes to be the real name of Blemmer. Here are the files. Go over them and see what you get out of them, then we'll discuss the matter."

There was silence for some minutes. Corporal Hughes reported in the meantime. Finally, Parker said:

"I can't understand why men with fifty thousand dollars should be hiding away around Spencer and committing petty larceny."

"When the bank was robbed, two thousand dollars were in tens and twenties, about five hundred in fifties, the balance in five hundred and thousand dollar bills."

"In other words, they have money they can't spend."

"Exactly. No doubt by this time all the bills of smaller denomination have been spent, because there are five men to feed and clothe, and getaways cost a lot of money. They can't hope to spend the larger bills in a small town, except by making a big purchase, perhaps an automobile, and then either selling it at a small part of the original cost or making a getaway with it."

"I see by the files that all the larger stores and every bank has been warned about those bills."

"Yes, and at the time," explained the Inspector, "when we notified the banks, we felt quite sure Blemmer would never try to get into Canada. But I have an idea why he came here. I believe that other

gangsters are looking for Blemmer to avenge Slater. If it is true Blemmer gave information to the law that convicted Slater, every gangster in the world will be after him to put him on the spot."

"Sounds reasonable, Inspector. If we could formulate an idea as to why the man wanted to come to Canada, we would be better able to contemplate his future movements."

"The simple reason why gangsters shun Canada is that they fear the Scarlet Riders. Yet they must know they have very little chance in the southern part of the Dominion, and they know that it is almost sure death or capture for them to go into the north where they have but a small chance to escape."

"No man has ever escaped yet, Inspector."

"No, never, but they don't know that. The people south of the international boundary have no idea what it means to travel in the far north, with its bitter cold and no homes nor stores, with villages two to three hundred miles apart along the Mackenzie River and a thousand miles on the Arctic Coast. They have no idea of how carefully we watch every man who tries to go beyond the railroads."

"It is all quite clear to me now, Inspector. I will leave at once for Spencer."

"Yes, and take plenty of ammunition. You may have to fight it out and — funny I didn't think of it before." He picked up the telephone.

"Orderly," he said, "look in the classified files and see if you have any record of a man named Win-

brooke. It's an odd name, you ought to find it easily. If you find anything, bring it right in."

The men talked over the case for perhaps ten minutes, and the orderly entered.

"Here are two cards for Winbrooke, sir," and laid the cards on the desk and left the room.

"Hum. Hum. 'Oscar Winbrooke, son of Gabriel Winbrooke. Tourist. Desires to go to Mackenzie River delta and prospect.' 'Gabriel Winbrooke, accompanied by son Oscar. Desires to go to Mackenzie River delta to prospect.' " There was a pause, "and both cards are of the same date, and show their papers clear and that they had come from Spencer, Alberta, where they visited friends. Sergeant, you are about to make an important arrest unless I miss my guess."

"Any special instructions, sir?"

"Only this, get your man. I'll telephone Swift Current to have Corporal Hutchens and Constables Flood and Joyce proceed to Spencer at once and await your arrival. They will report to you. Remember, Sergeant, you are going after five dangerous men, and the head of the gang is a shrewd man. This man Butch is a killer, and so is Gyp; and don't trust the others. Get your men, hurry back with them, and good luck."

"Thank you, sir."

Parker and Hughes saluted their superior and strode from the room to make their preparations for departure. An hour later, after a hasty meal, and with their usual equipment, blankets, ponchos, some

food, rifles, revolvers, and ammunition, the policemen headed out from the headquarter's stables and set their faces toward Spencer.

A pretty sight to see — the Scarlet Riders on duty or on parade. When a recruit first straddles a police horse, he is apt to bounce up and down like a rubber ball, but after a few weeks' training, he rides as if he were part of the horse. Because he holds the reins in his left hand, his revolver holster is worn on the right side, in order that if needed, a single flip of the hand throws up the leather cover, and in but a fraction of a second the revolver is in his hand and ready for use; whereas if carried on the left side, it would be necessary to reach across the body to the other side, and if the horses are in motion, it would likely cause the hand to fumble with the reins or in event of bending low over the saddle to avoid being a mark for the enemy, the revolver might not be reached at all.

The men rode slowly. They did not wish to tire their horses and, as it was a hot day, they decided to ride late, and make better time in the evening after the sun had gone down.

"Ought to make Spencer day after tomorrow, Sergeant."

"Yes, and I suppose the others will be there by the time we get there. They haven't so far to go. Say, Hughes, what kind of a man is this farmer Smythe?"

"Oh, a decent sort of a fellow. About fifty, I

should say. Just the ordinary type of a hard-working farmer. Has a small family. Is rather sociable and doesn't try to hide anything."

"Do you suppose he has any idea Blemmer is really Winbrooke?"

"No I don't, Sergeant. I believe the man is honest, and if he thought he was dealing with a crook, would turn him in."

"That's one thing in our favor then. I haven't been around Spencer much. What is the country like when you get away from town?"

"Well, the country is rolling, and there are several fine streams, and southwest of town about ten miles is a large woods."

"Ever been in those woods?"

"Several years ago while on patrol I went through a part of the woods while looking for cattle thieves."

"Anything unusual about the woods?" asked Parker.

Hughes thought a moment before answering. He was trying to recall everything he had seen there.

"No, nothing so far as I recall. There is a narrow wagon road running on the east side of the woods, on the north is a farm, and adjoining that, the Smythe farm. On the south side is open country to the railroad tracks about a mile away. I have never been on the west side."

"How far into the woods have you been?"

"Only a short distance, Sergeant. But what are you driving at?"

"I'll tell you, Corporal. So far as I know all the farmers in that vicinity are honest, loyal citizens. I don't know them, but if they were not good citizens they would be on report. You vouch for Smythe, and I am inclined to believe all the farmers thereabouts are reliable. If Blemmer is in that vicinity as we believe, because of Winbrooke calling on Smythe and the other things they must be hiding away somewhere near, and that place is not with any of the farmers."

"You believe then, they are hiding in the woods?"

"Exactly!"

The men rode on in silence. Just before sundown they watered and tethered their horses for a little while, ate a lunch, and then walked about talking over the case they had been assigned to. Both men were agreed on the fact that Blemmer and his gang would be found in the vicinity of Spencer in some place other than on one of the farms. The more they discussed the matter the more convinced Parker was that the hiding place was in the woods.

The men rode late that night and rode fast. The evening was cool and the horses enjoyed the run. Two days later they arrived at Spencer and located Corporal Hutchens and Constables Joyce and Flood at the hotel. After a short conference, it was decided to await action until after dark, and in the meantime, to split up, each man to watch a section of the town, keeping out of sight as much as possible. Sergeant Parker would watch at the depot, Corporal Hughes the general store and post office, Corporal Hutchens

the road leading toward the Smythe farm and the woods, and Flood and Joyce the east side of town.

That evening at dinner the men gathered at the little hotel and formulated a plan to enable them to make a thorough search of the territory surrounding the Smythe farm.

CHAPTER IV

THE HIDE-OUT

WHAT'S for supper, Butch?"

"Same old junk, Rusty. Say, we've got close to fifty grand in our kits an' can't buy a hot dog. How come?"

"What do you suppose would happen if we were to flash a hundred dollar bill in this town? We'd be spotted in a minute."

"Let's move along den. What's the use a hangin' 'roun' here anyway?"

"We have to wait for the others, Butch. You know that."

"Oh, yeah? Say, we're gettin' along fine without those mugs. I says, let's get goin' an' split the swag atween us."

"Listen, Butch, old boy, that's my idea, but not yet. We need those handy baboons until we get north of Edmonton, and then we'll have a nice little picnic; we'll put 'em on the spot if they don't scam and you can use that precious machine gun of yours."

"How long you goin' to wait for 'em?"

"A week more at the longest, but one or two of them ought to be showing up any time now, and

say, Butch, we need a man we can plant, and that man is Red. We can plant him, after filling him with a lot of bum information, sick the flatfoots on him, we get away, and I've had my revenge."

"You mean to give 'im the works?"

"Sure and then there'll be one less to divide with. See?"

Butch laughed and went on preparing supper.

They were in a little log house in about the center of Spencer woods. The house was not new, and yet was in good repair. It was a comfortable building, had a stove, two rude bunks, a table and four rough chairs. To make it comfortable, with blankets, candles, cooking utensils and the like, as well as to provide food and clothing, Blemmer and Butch had for the first time since boyhood turned petty thieves. So many thefts had been made that the subject was much talked about by the farmers and townspeople. Tonight Blemmer, clean as usual, but with torn clothes, decided to pay another visit on his friend Farmer Smythe. He wanted to get some clothing, if at all possible, to replace the suit he had ruined in getting away from the posse across the border. And so, after their meal and darkness had set in, he and Butch started for the farm. Butch, as on the previous visit, was to hide in the bushes near the farmhouse, his revolver ready for use in case any trouble arose.

"I won't be gone long, Butch, and I'll try to bring you something to eat."

Blemmer knocked at the door, which was opened

by Mrs. Smythe, and a moment later the gangster and the farmer were seated in the comfortable kitchen discussing the days when Mr. Smythe and the senior Winbrooke were friends.

"Where are you stayin', Oscar?"

"Well, Mr. Smythe, it's like this. I've been looking around for a place for a friend of mine. He wants to buy a farm. If he gets what he wants, I'll get five hundred dollars. I need the money, so I've been looking around for a place and staying wherever I can."

"Broke?"

"Yes, dead broke. Can't you see by my clothes I haven't a dime?"

"Wal, you don't look as perk as the first time I saw you. Your father was a good dresser, too. I remember way back when we were at school in Ioway, he was the best dressed lad in school, an' when he worked in the bank, wal, I'll swan, he'd make Beau Brummel look like a piece the cat dragged in."

Both men laughed. The conversation continued for some time and then Mr. Smythe got out some old, but clean and well-mended clothes and gave them to Blemmer. He insisted on Blemmer remaining overnight, but the gangster pleaded he had an appointment early in the morning and must be starting back toward Rawson, east of Spencer. He suggested, however, that a lunch would be welcome. And while good Mrs. Smythe prepared a basket of food, her husband and Blemmer resumed their talking.

"Ever see any Mounties in your travels, Oscar?"

"No," came from the startled Blemmer, "why?"

"I haven't seen many lately. Other day a young feller stopped and was asking about strangers. Been a lot of thieving aroun' lately, small stuff. Besides I guess maybe because when last heard from the Blemmer gangsters were headed toward Canada, they're checkin' up a bit."

"Are there many Mounties around here?"

"Not many, the nearest detachment is forty miles away, but it don't take many of those fellers to cover the territory. We Canadians brag they always get their man, an' they always do."

"If the lunch is ready, I'd better get started."

"How's the lunch, maw?"

"Ready in a jiffy," replied Mrs. Smythe.

"Yes, them Mounties know their business. Heard neighbor Swanson tell over the party line afore supper that he saw four or five of 'em at the hotel tonight."

"That's unusual around here, isn't it?" Blemmer was both interested and worried now.

"Yep, ain't seen more'n one of 'em here at a time since the cattle rustlers got caught three years back."

"Here's your lunch Mr. Winbrooke," said Mrs. Smythe, walking over to Blemmer and handing him a basket.

"Thanks. And now I must be going. Good night. I'll see you again before I leave the country."

"Do that Oscar. I kin see you've had hard luck,

but you're always welcome here an' anythin' I can do for my old school chum, your dad, I'll do."

"I'll remember that. Thanks again and good night." The door was opened for Blemmer and he walked out.

"Quick," said Blemmer to Butch as soon as he came up to him lying flat on the ground, "the sooner we get back to the woods the better. There's several Mounties in town."

"Town nothin'; I've been on the ground while waitin' fer yuh an' I can hear horses an' they ain't far off."

"Come on then, back to the woods in a hurry and don't talk. Keep moving."

As fast as they could walk, and even part of the time running, the two gangsters hurried to the woods, but there their progress was necessarily slower. It was quite dark and they could scarcely make their way through the woods to the hut. In fact, twice they were lost and had to retrace their steps in order to find the log house.

Once inside, the window shutters were closed and a candle was lighted. Blemmer placed the bundle of clothing on the table together with the basket of food. He went outside and tried to find chinks through which he might see the candlelight. He was satisfied however no one could see the light unless almost beside the building, and no one would get that close without being heard, he was sure.

By the time he was again inside, Butch had examined the food and started a lunch, in which

Blemmer joined. They had not fared any too well of late, and even when they had meat, neither was a good enough cook to make a tasty meal out of it. They ate in silence. Butch was worried, that was evident. The meal ended, both men prepared to rest; they removed their coats and rolled them up for pillows, then their shoes and hats. Their revolvers were beside them and the machine gun unpacked and ready for use. Rusty put out the light. They might be captured, but not alive and if anyone tried to enter the house, he would pay with his life.

For some time all was quiet in the cabin. Then Blemmer in a low voice said, "What about those horses you heard?"

"Wal, Rusty, I ain't smart, and I'm jest plain dumb when it comes to schoolin' but I kin tell a horse's hoofs when I hears it. First I seen two horses at the crossroads jest a little ways off toward town, then I heard poundin' on the road like horses was runnin'."

"Was it plain?"

"Sure it was plain. Jest like this." And Butch proceeded to beat his hand on the side of his bunk, a rhythmic steady beat. For a moment Blemmer was quiet, then he broke into a low laugh, his first genuine one for a long time.

"You big ape, that was your heart beating you heard. Go to sleep, I'll stay awake a couple of hours; then you listen."

Blemmer rested in his bunk, but his mind was

busy. They must get away from the woods, they must get where they would have food, clothes, comforts. The Mounties were in the vicinity — and there was no telling what they were there for — perhaps looking for them, but they had committed no crimes in Canada, save to steal a little food and a few necessities. Blemmer had been very careful to commit no crime that would attract wide attention. True, petty larceny was out of his line; had been ever since he started on the road of crime as a boy — and he had never actually committed many crimes himself, he had acted as the brains and if anyone was caught, the other fellow got the “rap” just like Slater. One way of getting away would be to buy a car, giving one of those thousand dollar bills for it, drive it north until they reached one of the larger cities, then send Red (there’s an idea) back with the car to some small village and sell it. Red might get some money, maybe get caught, but at least the police would not be on the chief’s trail. If only the rest of the gang would show up, then he could operate. He couldn’t work alone, and once there, well, it isn’t far from the Mackenzie River Delta to Alaska, a few hundred miles, just nice exercise when there are no police trailing you. Then to take the first boat to the Pacific Coast, and then to South America. By that time he would have at least thirty grand left, enough for him and Butch to live until he would be forgotten, or could have his face altered. Perhaps he might run into a new racket — an “honest” one.

Blemmer would have been an excellent business man, perhaps a lawyer or doctor if he had but directed his mind along honest lines. He was clever, resourceful, an able leader, but lazy, too lazy to work as long as he could live off the labor of others, even if their labors consisted of robbery, dope peddling, and other crimes that sometimes meant murder.

The chief gangster looked through the darkness toward the ceiling a long time, he had no idea of how long, when he heard a low sound, like something moving among the trees; he could hear the faint snapping of brush. He awakened Butch. They put on their shoes, coats, and hats and with revolvers in hand, stepped outside the log house. If anyone entered, he would be at their mercy. The noise continued some minutes and then Blemmer heard in a low voice:

"If this's the place why don't we find 'em?" Blemmer recognized Lefty's voice.

"I ain't goin' no further. Let's 'rest here till sunup."

This time Blemmer was sure it was Gyp speaking. He emitted a low call: "Yuhoo." It was answered in the same way, and the two new arrivals walked toward the voice they heard. A few moments later, four of the Blemmer gang were inside the hut and talking in low tones.

"What took you so long, and did you see Red?"

"We kept runnin' intuh Mounties an' had tuh

lay low. Red left us as soon as we crossed thuh border."

"That's all right. I didn't want you to travel together. Two men don't attract much attention, but when there are three or four it's different. Hear anything about us?"

"Yeah, papers got a lot to say. They're lookin' fer us in Dakota an' Minnesota yet. Dose 'G' men say we're in Canada."

"That's bad. Well, we'll be moving along soon, if Red shows up all right, if not, it's his funeral."

"Listen, Rusty, you've got dat guy pegged wrong. Red ain't no bad guy an' he kin talk with thuh best o' 'em jest like you."

"There's something to that. Had anything to eat?" asked Blemmer.

"Sure, we've been eat'n swell an' offen. We held up a mug near Emerson an' got two hundred dollars."

"And got away with it, and the police patrolling every mile of the border!"

"Sure. Say, dese Mounties ain't so much."

"Naw, dey're like thuh town constable back home, all uniform an' no brains. What's on thuh docket, Chief?"

"We'll wait a few more days for Red. I can use him after all, I guess. There's a freight through here every five or six hours, and three passengers a day. Unless something happened to Red he ought to be along before long, if he can find the place, and if you two found it, he ought to."

There was but little more talk, and save for a man on guard, all rested throughout the night and far into the morning. The shutters over the windows being closed, no daylight seeped in to awaken the criminals, and because the hut was in the thickest part of the woods, there was very little sunlight there.

The following day, while Butch was looking around the edge of the woods, making a survey of their hide-out, looking for possible signs of intruders, and watching the road for police, he saw a figure coming down the road, walking fast. As he drew nearer, Butch recognized Red and when close, called to him. A few minutes later the entire gang was reunited, and plans were immediately being made to get away.

"Rusty, I know you don't like me any too well, but that's because you don't understand me," said Red.

"Cut it. You're one of the best ever and from now on we're going to be the best of friends." This from Blemmer.

"Okay, chief, shake." The two men shook hands and for the time being at least, the feud was at an end.

"Now I have some news for you," said Red. "I intended to stop in town and get the lay of the land. I didn't want to walk around for days looking for this woods. I got into town off a freight about six o'clock and was going to the hotel for breakfast, when I saw five Mounted Police come out. I

ducked behind the side of the building near the hotel porch and heard 'em talking. One said 'we'll cover the Spencer woods today, we'll comb every inch of it and we're going to work fast. I want to make this roundup between now and tomorrow morning if that gang is anywhere around here. Three of us will go in an automobile, the other two will ride their horses in case of the gang fleeing through fields. Be ready to set out at twelve sharp and have dinner before then.' "

"This afternoon! Say, Red," said Blemmer, "that warning is worth our lives, maybe. You're my friend for life and I want you others to treat Red like you would me."

There was a low word of approval.

"Let's see. We can't go down the railroad track. We'd be spotted by some farmer and those Mounties may have warned the farmers to be on the lookout for us."

"But," spoke up Gyp, "we ain't done nothin' in Canada. They can't do nothin' to us."

"No? Only a holdup, suspicion, maybe hold for officers from the States. I think we might get out of that, but what about the dough we have? We can't alibi that."

"Say, Chief," this time Red was speaking, "I have an idea that's a good one. What about giving each of us a part of the split, then you hide the rest. If caught, we won't have much on us, and anyway, when things have quieted down, you can come back for the rest of the dough."

"Yeah," "Sure," "Atta boy," came from the others, all save Blemmer who would not agree to the plan. He had a small package of large bills in his clothes and he intended to keep it, and perhaps would not even have to split at any time.

"I'm still running this show, boys. We have a little time left, let's get busy and figure what we're to do."

"Yeah, use your heads, you mugs."

Plan after plan was suggested, but none were suited to the chief. One idea sounded good until Blemmer would start tearing it apart, and then it sounded foolish. Finally Red made a suggestion. He was talking too much to suit Blemmer, but he was in need of plans right now and couldn't afford to let any good idea pass by even if it came from someone else.

"Shoot," demanded Blemmer.

"These Mounties will have to come down this narrow dirt road on the east side, the one I came on, won't they?"

"Sure," replied Butch.

"Then they'll have to leave the car there. The two men on horseback may ride around the woods, but the three will have to walk through the woods. What about the car? I can drive one, and I guess all of us can."

"Sure, but how — " Blemmer laughed. "Now I have it. We'll crawl high up in those tall trees near the road. We'll be out of sight and when the

Mounties are far enough away, we'll get the car and make a getaway before the Mounties can reach the road."

"That's the idea, but what about abandoning the car?"

"That's right. Wherever that car is found will be the point the new search will start from."

Here was the final link in the whole plan. It required careful consideration. Red and Blemmer disagreed with each other on several plans and then:

"I've got it boys," said Blemmer with gusto, "we can make the Smythe farm way ahead of the police, and they can't travel fast enough to see where we turn off the road."

"Whatja mean?" asked Butch.

"I know the lay of the land there. We can run the car into the barn. If old man Smythe won't help me out of this, I'll help him out of his troubles permanently. Come on boys, up in the trees, and remember Butch, have the machine gun uncovered and ready for action the minute we get in the car."

CHAPTER V

THE TRAIL LEADS NORTH

BLEMMER and his henchmen walked toward the road which wound its way into the woods for some distance and had formerly been used for logging. At a juncture where the road widened out they selected some tall trees with heavy branches for their hide-outs. Climbing high up in the trees, they awaited developments. They had a long wait, for it was nearly three o'clock before an automobile was heard coming slowly down the woods road, moving at a slow speed to allow the two horsemen to keep close to the car.

In the car sat three Scarlet Riders with Sergeant Parker at the wheel. Here where the road became narrow he stopped the car, turned it around, and the three policemen alighted.

"Listen fellows, this big bus will take care of three prisoners if we catch them. The other two will have to walk beside the horses. I'll put the keys under the floor mat, and in case we get the men, be sure to shackle them securely and the first ones here can start for town with them. We three will search the woods, the other two will ride around the outside. Have your guns handy. Come on!"

As if the search had been given a full rehearsal, the five policemen went into action. The men on foot spread out and worked their way toward the center of the woods. Two of them passed right below the tree where Blemmer was concealed. He had seen where Parker hid the car keys and, as the noise of the policemen breaking through the brush grew faint, gave the signal to his men to descend. The five dropped to the ground and together cautiously made their way to the car. After seeing that no one was about, they made a final rush for the car; Blemmer picked up the keys and switched on the ignition while Butch set the machine gun across his arm, ready for action with its muzzle pointing toward the woods.

Blemmer put his foot on the starter and a few seconds later, the car sped down the road. It was fully five minutes before the policemen reached the road, and all they saw was a cloud of dust. Sergeant Parker knew he had missed his prey, that his task must be started all over again, he knew that he would be severely censured for allowing the car to be stolen, but he still wondered how the gangsters could have known where the keys were.

The men on horseback gave chase, but it was futile. The gangsters reached the Smythe farm in just a few minutes. Blemmer drove right into the barn, the door being open. The men closed the barn doors to hide the car from view of the road and walked into the house without knocking, Butch carrying the machine gun.

"Why, what does this mean?" demanded Mrs. Smythe, quite startled.

"Where's the old man and your boy?" demanded Blemmer.

"They're in the fields working, of course. What do you want?"

"Quiet from you. Listen, old woman, the police are after us and we're not going to be taken. Get me?" Blemmer spoke with fierce, snappy, repulsive gestures.

"Oh-h-h-h-h," shrieked the poor woman, "I know you now, you are the murderers, the gangsters the police are looking for." With this she started to scream. Gyp grabbed the woman roughly and held his revolver close to her face. "Quiet old girl, or this is the end of you. We ain't takin' no chances on you or anyone else. Pipe down."

The terrified woman kept still.

"What do you do when you want your husband to come in from the fields?" demanded Blemmer. There was no answer. "Give her the works if she doesn't answer. Twist her arms, and if that doesn't do the trick, burn her feet." The woman's heart almost stopped beating — and then she said weakly:

"I ring the big bell on the porch."

"Ring the bell, Red." This was a crisp order from Blemmer.

Red went outside, rang the bell, and returned to the kitchen. In the meantime the other men had posted themselves at windows where they could watch the road in both directions. There was a

dead silence for a few minutes and then the stillness of the afternoon in the lonely farmhouse was broken by the tinkling of the telephone.

"I'll take care of that," said Blemmer. He went to the wall phone took the receiver off the hook and listened. It was a farmer party line and the call was not for the Smythe's. Blemmer put his hand over the mouthpiece and repeated what he heard.

"It's the police at the next farm. Wants operator to send a car out there. Edward's place. Wants immediate connection with Edmonton. Hold the line." There was a pause for a few minutes, during which there was a deathlike silence in the room. It was broken when Mr. Smythe and his son drove their team and rig into the yard. Red went to the kitchen door to cover them when they entered the kitchen. Then Blemmer started repeating what he heard:

"Send a troop of police at once. Gang got away from me but can't go far. Have search made for black touring car, bearing license plates, Alberta, 67-54-67. Will continue search. Found evidence. Gangsters heavily armed." Blemmer hung up the receiver just as Mr. Smythe and his son entered the kitchen.

"Where's ma, an' what are you doin' here?" the old farmer demanded of Red.

"Keep your shirt on, old boy, and you'll be all right. Keep quiet and don't start anything. There are five of us here and we can handle you and all the other farmers around here."

"Why, Mr. Winbrooke," said the farmer, catch-

ing sight of Blemmer, "what is all this, and what is wrong with you, Martha?"

"Shut up," demanded Blemmer. "Your wife is all right. The police are at Edward's farm and they're looking for us. We are staying here until we can get away and either you help us or you'll be pushing up daisies ahead of schedule. Get me?"

"Martha, speak to me, speak to me!" The old man was almost frantic.

"Be quiet, paw, an' do as they say. There are five men in the house and they'll kill us if we bother 'em."

Silence set upon the group. Half an hour later a large car was seen going down the road toward the Edward's farm. Later it came back and stopped in front of the Smythe farmhouse. Three policemen got out and walked toward the house. The gangsters watching the road saw another cloud of dust in the distance and rightly guessed it was caused by the policemen on horseback.

"Go to the door, Smythe, and watch your step. We'll keep your wife and son with us, and one chirp out of you and we'll bore them full of holes and you and the police, too. We have a machine gun that barks low but bites deep."

There was silence again. Then came a rap on the door. Mr. Smythe answered the knock — knowing full well it was a matter of life and death as to how he talked and acted.

"How do you do. Are you Mr. Smythe?"

"I am, sir."

"Have you been in the house long?"

"Yes, a coupla hours."

"Did you see a car pass here, driving fast?"

"Yes, sergeant, it passed a while back drivin' toward Spencer."

"It didn't stop here, did it?"

"No sir, kept right on going."

"Thanks. Better keep your eyes open. There are some desperate men, murderers in fact, around here. Good-by."

"Good-by, sir."

The door was closed. The policemen returned to their car and drove away just as those on horse-back came up.

There was little to be done before dark. Blemmer knew he must get out of that part of the country as soon as possible. He commanded Mrs. Smythe to prepare a meal for all of them, and when it was ready, the men ate with relish, as if they had no cares in the world and as if they were on peaceful, legitimate business. During the meal Blemmer demanded a lunch be put up, enough for a couple of meals, and then asked for their money. The poor old couple were trembling. Mrs. Smythe started to put up the lunch while Mr. Smythe went into the bedroom and drew out a wooden box from under the bed and handed Blemmer a small roll of bills.

"I want all of it, you old fool. All of it!" There was no mistaking the meaning this time. Mr. Smythe hesitated a moment, then walked out of

the room again. Butch had his eyes on the plate in front of him, yet was watching the old farmer out of the corner of his eyes, he saw him turn to the right, toward the telephone, instead of toward the left, where the bedroom was. He arose and quietly walked to the door. He saw Mr. Smythe take the receiver from the hook — there was a flash, a deafening sound and Mr. Smythe fell to the floor, a bullet had pierced his heart. Shrieks immediately filled the air as wife and son rushed to take care of the man. Butch calmly walked into the room and replaced the receiver.

"You fool," cried Blemmer, "with the receiver off the hook, central could hear the shot. Get your stuff together, quick, we'll have to get out of here before the Mounties get back. Hurry now, all of you. Into the barn, Red, and get the car out!"

Without any lost motion, the gangsters gathered first one thing, then another, their machine gun, ammunition and the like, then rifled the old farmer's money box under the bed, grabbed up the food prepared by Mrs. Smythe, cut the phone wires and in but a few short moments were speeding along the main road toward the Spencer woods. They passed the woods, crossed the tracks, and drove on until they came to a road leading east. They followed this until they came to a road leading north. The signpost read "Spencer 7 miles." They sped along until they reached the edge of town, where they stopped and put out the headlights, for by this time it was quite dark and the lights were neces-

sary on the rough, dirt road. Red walked into town keeping in the shadows of the buildings until he came to the hotel. There was not a policeman in sight. Then he walked back to the car, the lights were turned on and they drove to the filling station, where they filled up the gas tank and had the oil checked. Without paying the bill, and warning the attendant that if he gave an alarm he would be shot, the men set out toward the North again. They drove all that night until the tank was empty, then abandoned the car, and took to the fields, walking in the general direction of the railroad. Near morning they came to the little town of Chester. There was not a light in the town, nor anyone in sight. Walking quietly they entered the one block of business street. They must have transportation of some kind. A wagon, if not a car. But not a vehicle could be found. Had they but known it, Chester was composed of people of a religious sect that banned automobiles, and there was no need for teams.

Disgusted the men walked toward the depot, and there found an empty boxcar into which they climbed, and there out of sight of any possible night prowler, planned the next move. It did not take long to make a decision, for half an hour later a freight train stopped to set out a car, and when it pulled out the Blemmer gang was aboard, riding in a gondola car loaded with bridge iron.

In the meantime Sergeant Parker and his men were combing the countryside for the gangsters.

About midnight they rode to the Smythe farm and knocked on the door. Parker wanted the advice of a man who had been in the country many years, was well known and liked, and knew everyone in the vicinity and for many miles around.

The door was opened by Mrs. Smythe only after she had made sure who was at the door. Almost hysterical, she could give but little information, but the son was able to. He took the sergeant into the room where his father lay on the floor, just as he fell, and he told the whole story. He had not gone out for help, feeling sure that some of the gangsters were still in the vicinity and would kill him.

Here, indeed, was something to worry about! Parker felt sure he would do the same thing over again, leaving the car and the keys at the edge of the woods, but knew he had made a grave mistake. He had sent for more help. Hughes and another man had trailed the automobile to Spencer, had talked with the oil man who had filled the tank, and had kept on until they found the car in the middle of the road where it was abandoned. It was too dark to follow the trail across the fields, so they returned to Spencer and tried to get in touch with the other men. That could not be done, but Hughes had a fine idea, so he thought. It was not a great distance across country from where he found the abandoned car to the railroad. He would catch the first train going north and search in the vicinity of the next town. The night operator of the depot stated there would be a freight along about five in the morning, and

when it pulled out of Spencer, Hughes was aboard. At Chester, he saw five forms in the dim early morning light get aboard the train — so instead of getting off as intended, he remained in the caboose and when the train stopped at Summit, went into the station and wired his headquarters at Edmonton. The train was due in Edmonton in broad daylight, and he felt sure the men would get off the train long before then. Corporal Hughes was not a coward, but to attempt to capture five desperate men singlehanded was expecting too much — it would have been suicide. With two, or even one policeman with him, he would have had the car set out and would make an attempt to draw the men into the open. But alone, that was an impossible thing to do.

“Conductor, what’s the next stop?” asked Hughes. The train was again in motion.

“Flossmore. We take water there. Why?”

“Can you examine the car seals there and see if any have been tampered with?”

“Sure, if you want. What’s up, anyway?”

“There are some men aboard. If they are the men I think they are, I want them.”

“Okay, Mountie, just as you say,” replied the conductor. At Flossmore, the train crew examined the car seals. All were found to be intact, and so the conductor reported to Hughes when he reached the caboose, and the train was again under way.

“But there is a gondola loaded with bridge iron about the middle of the train and there’s someone

aboard it. I saw the top of a hat as we passed along, but remembering what you said, didn't stop or try to put the bums off."

"That's fine," replied Hughes. "What's the next stop and where does that gondola go to?"

"Next stop's Downer Crossing. The car goes through to Edmonton."

"Could you set that car out at the Crossing, if I assume all responsibility?"

"Mountie, I've been on this railroad almost thirty years and long ago found out that the Royal Canadian Mounted Policemen are not the representatives of the law, but *are* the law. Just write an order, will you?"

"Of course I will. Is there an operator at the Crossing?"

"Yes, both day and night."

"Then I will also write out a telegram and I wish you would see to it that it gets preference. How about it?"

"Anything to oblige, Corporal."

"Thanks."

Hughes wrote out the order to set out the car, and then a telegram to the Inspector, which read:

"At Downer Crossing. Positive five Blemmer gangsters in car being set out by my orders. Please send plane immediately with sufficient men to assist in capture. Signed, Hughes."

"There you are, Conductor, and maybe some day I can do as much for you."

"Huh, I was a farmer boy out on the prairies

when it was all a man's life was worth unless there was a Mountie about. You chaps have done enough for the Canadians to be entitled to a lot more. Forget it."

When the train arrived at the Crossing, the car was set out on a siding. Hughes kept out of sight. He felt sure the gangsters would not stay in the car — the sun would make it too uncomfortable for them — a car of steel combined with the bright sun would make the heat unbearable. There was a section-hand house not far from the depot, and he went in there, leaving the door open just wide enough to enable him to peek through. The train pulled out, and a moment later Hughes saw a head come slowly into view; then another appeared above the steel girders on the gondola. The gangsters (Hughes knew by the men's faces that they were Blemmer's men), looked about. Except for the section house, the shed used for storing the hand car, and the depot, there was not a building in sight.

One by one the gangsters dropped to the ground from the car and walked toward a small clump of trees not far from the right of way.

Hughes never took his eyes from where he had last seen the men — alone he was powerless, but when the plane arrived, then things would be different. He would be able to signal the location of the men and assist in their capture. It was almost unbearably hot in the little house. He opened up his tunic and removed his hat, yet the perspiration streamed from him. There was no such thing as

going outside, though. He knew that anything moving would attract the eyes of the men in the little wooded lot. All he could do was to wait. He was thirsty. He was hungry. The heat became so intense he could no longer stand it and he opened the door a little wider — the relief was not much, but every little helped. He opened the door some more. Then he saw one man come from among the trees and walk to the little depot. He remained but a couple of minutes, then returned to the trees. A few minutes later, Hughes saw all five men walk out from their shady hiding place, and go down the railroad tracks toward Edmonton.

CHAPTER VI

SERGEANT CARTER

I AM SORRY, Sergeant, but your request to return to Arctic duty has been denied."

"But what's the reason, Inspector? There's no complaint about my work there, and I have been on the Force long enough to have preference over some of the younger men."

"We need you here, Carter. Besides, you look like an old man. How old are you?"

"Thirty-two, sir."

"Thirty-two! You look like fifty. That's the trouble with the North. The first three years there a man ages ten years and every year after that he ages five more. We can't afford to have so many old young men on our hands. No, Sergeant, you will stay here on the prairies and rejuvenate."

"As the Adjutant once told me," said Carter sadly, "'Orders are given to be obeyed, not questioned or disregarded.'"

"That's the idea, old friend. I know how you feel, but this is for your own good as well as for the good of the Force."

"I'll have to make the best of it, I suppose, but I'd give a lot to change from these boots to moc-

casins and from this stiff tunic to an easy fitting parka."

The Inspector laughed. He remembered his own experience the first time he donned a uniform after wearing the loose clothing of the North for several years.

"We're having a hard time rounding up that gang from the States I told you about, Carter. I want you to join in the case. Here's how matters stand at the present," and the Inspector informed Carter of all that had occurred to date.

"And this morning Hughes wired for a plane. Unfortunately, there isn't a plane available either here or in Regina. The few planes we have are on duty elsewhere. Instead, I telephoned the railroad to have a special train rushed to Spencer to pick up our men there and take them to Downer Crossing. I want you and ten men to ride over there. You can make it in five or six hours, and pick up the trail."

"Downer Crossing. Let's see. It's a long time since I was there, but if I remember rightly, there's an inland town, about five miles from the railroad."

"That's right, Saxony. The car in which the gangsters were riding was set out at Downer Crossing. There is nothing there but the depot, and that wouldn't be there if it were not for the fact that a little branch line of the C.N.R. crosses the other line."

"It's a cinch the gang won't remain there long. They'll —"

The telephone bell interrupted the conversation.

"Hello. Yes, this is the Inspector. Yes, hello Hughes. What's up? Oh, the men got away again, eh? Well, I'm sending Sergeant Carter and some men down there and a special is bringing the rest of the men up from Spencer. Don't expose yourself, but keep those men in sight if you can. All right. Good-by."

"Get the drift of the conversation, Sergeant?"

"Yes sir."

"Order out your men and equipment. Get over to Saxony as soon as you can."

It didn't take long for the efficient Sergeant Carter to issue the orders necessary for setting out.

Three days prior to this Sergeant Carter returned from a two-month leave, granted when he returned from the Far North with two prisoners. It was his desire and intention to return to the North, but the Adjutant of the Force objected. Carter was a valuable man anywhere, and when the Adjutant noticed how many years had been added onto the appearance of the young man, decided the Sergeant was through in the North.

Carter had spent his leave at home — on the little farm near Regina. It was his first visit there in six years and he enjoyed every minute of his stay with his father, mother, brother, and sisters. When he reported for duty, he went to Regina. It

was his first visit to the old training station in many years. He had no friends there now except the Commissioner, Adjutant, and Paymaster. All the old instructors had been assigned to duties in various parts of the Dominion. Still Carter enjoyed his brief stay there. He took a horse from the stable and rode about the drill grounds — his first horseback ride in six years and as he saw the young recruits drilling, at the rifle ranges or riding field, he laughed as he recalled his days as a recruit — just a big, overgrown country boy who had his first train ride at the expense of the government when he was ordered to report for training. He remembered with a smile on his face how awkward he was, round shouldered from work in the fields, yet how soon he straightened up — how his body ached after a busy day at drills, the only rest being at the lectures on law, arrests, making out documents, and the like. At dinner time, he stabled his horse and went to the mess hall and sat at the Sergeant's table and watched the recruits as they ate huge stacks of beef, potatoes, and other vegetables and each tackled a piece of pie large enough for three men. So engrossed was he in his memories of the past as he watched the men, he forgot his own meal. He listened to their talk, these young chaps from the farm, the city — some from the homes of the poor and some from the homes of the rich, but now all equal in their uniforms of the world's most famous police force. Nothing counts there except merit. The talk was clean —

of flowers, home, mother, sister, and Carter recalled that during his entire career on the Force, he had never heard a man say anything or do anything that he would be ashamed to have his own mother or sister hear or see. Perhaps that was one reason, he thought, the Scarlet Riders were so highly respected throughout the world.

That afternoon he was ordered to report to "G" division for duty, and had immediately put in his application for return to Northern duty, which was later denied for the reasons given.

Carter and his men rode from headquarters without any display, they were on serious business, not on a parade. Each man carried the usual equipment — their rifles handy, their revolvers at their side. They were an alert group of young men. They had no great desire to arrest men for the joy of doing so; a true policeman would rather have his area orderly, and not be compelled to make arrests, but there are times when society must be protected from the evildoers and that was the case at hand now. Dangerous men who had killed in the States, and killed in Canada, were at large and they must be placed where they could do no more harm, and pay the penalty for violating the laws of the Dominion of Canada.

The sun was losing its brightness as Carter and his men rode up to the depot at Downer Crossing. Carter dismounted and walked inside. There was not a sound — no answer to his rap on the office door. He went outside the building and peered

through the window — there were two figures on the floor. Calling to two of his men, they went inside the depot and forced the door leading into the office — and there on the floor lay the operator and Corporal Hughes, both badly wounded. While the other policemen attended to the wounded men, Carter examined the office — the safe was open, it had been robbed — the loss there would not be great as very little business was transacted by the depot, but it was robbery just the same.

Rather than cause the two men, who had been clubbed, the additional pain of being carried across a horse into Saxony for treatment, Carter lighted a red lantern and instructed one man to flag the northbound passenger train which he ascertained from the timetable tacked to the wall of the office, was due in half an hour.

But Carter didn't have to wait half an hour. In ten minutes the special bearing Sergeant Parker and his men drew up to the depot, and the wounded men were placed aboard that train, accompanied by one of the policemen, and the train sped on to Edmonton.

"You're Sergeant Parker, I presume?" Carter put the question.

"Yes, and you?"

"I'm Carter, recently back from the Arctic and —"

"Now I know you. Heard a lot about you, but we've never met before."

"I have orders to comb this country for Blem-

mer. It is believed the gang is in or around Saxony. At any rate, we'll start from there and see what success we have."

"I'm afraid my horses won't be able to keep up with yours, Sergeant Carter. They've been on this train some time. How about me hanging around here a bit while you go to Saxony?"

"All right. Mount."

The policemen ran to their steeds and a moment later Carter and his men were galloping toward Saxony. It didn't take the men long to reach the little village. The men then spread out, each seeking the men they were after, or some news. Yes, the villagers said, there had been five armed men in the village but a little while before — they had cut the telephone lines and were no doubt getting ready to shoot up the town when they heard the distant beat of the horses' hoofs and they made a dash for it. They had gone down the railroad track toward Downer Crossing. Carter smiled. There were men there to welcome the gangsters. That was enough.

Back toward Downer Crossing went Carter and his men — but when they arrived there, only Sergeant Parker and his men were to be seen. So he rode up the railroad track, with one man, the others spread out on the bank above the railroad. They rode an hour, but did not see either of the gangsters. Carter was dismayed. He had overlooked something, what was it?

Spread out as before, the policemen rode back

in the direction of Saxony. By this time the moon was up and one could see fairly well across the fields. Carter, accustomed to the darkness of the Far North, could distinguish objects in the semi-darkness much easier than could his companions. As they approached a farmhouse, one very close to the little village, he saw a crouched figure skulking near the rear porch. He urged his horse to a gallop, the man arose and started to run, a moment later Carter was almost upon him, when the man turned and fired a revolver shot straight at Carter, but it missed — in another moment Carter had the man by the collar and held him from the ground until he brought his horse to a stop. By that time the other policemen were alongside Carter.

"Keep up the search, boys, I'm taking this fellow to the village lockup. One of you ride into Downer Crossing and tell Parker to ride out this way and work with you." Carter now had the prisoner handcuffed to his saddle horn, and was walking his horse toward the lockup.

"Well, who are you and what are you doing here?" Carter spoke with the decisiveness of one in authority. He had the prisoner in a cell in the village lockup. "I warn you," continued Carter "that any statement you make may be used as evidence against you. What have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothin'."

"Why were you loitering around that farmhouse where I found you?"

"Say, you're a copper ain't you?"

"I guess that's what some people call me. Not in Canada though. Here we're called either constables or policemen."

"Then you're a policeman, huh?"

"That's right."

"Then suppose you find out who I am an' wot I'm here fer."

"That's just what I intend to do, my man." Carter spoke grimly.

"Third degree, huh?" The man paled slightly.

"No, nothing like that. We don't have such a thing in our Force. They only have third degrees where the policemen haven't enough wit to get their information and have to use brute strength."

"Yeah?"

"When I searched you I didn't find much. A few dollars, some ammunition, and a revolver. What I want to find out is who you are. How about it, going to tell me?"

"You're crazy."

"Okay, mister. We'll keep you here until morning then we'll take you to headquarters in Edmonton. If you are who I think you are, our fingerprint man will soon say I am right."

Carter arose, walked out of the little jail and locked the door. Hour after hour during the night the policemen rode the country but couldn't find

a trace of anyone who could not satisfactorily explain who they were — all were farmers of the vicinity.

When morning came, Carter saw that his prisoner was fed and then took him to Downer Crossing and sent him to Edmonton by train in charge of one of the younger policemen. The search continued until near noon — by that time men and beasts were completely tired out and a rest was ordered until late in the afternoon.

After their lunch, Sergeant Carter called Sergeant Parker to one side:

"Either these gangsters bear a charmed life or we're about as poor a pair of policemen as can be found in a year's travel."

"I agree, Sarge. Here we are, more than a dozen men and can't find those ruffians and we know they're somewhere around here. They can't get south, there are policemen patrolling the country south of Downer Crossing now. They can't go west or east because of the same reason. We must push toward the north and Edmonton."

"That's exactly as I figure it. We'll push north this evening and search every building, haystack, and field. I feel ashamed of the way things have turned out."

"You do? Say, what about me? I had those men bottled at Spencer's woods and they got away and Hughes lost them, although that wasn't his fault with five desperadoes against one policeman."

"If I'm not mistaken, the man I caught last night

is one of the gang, and if he is, it'll be one less to hunt for. Let's have a little rest, we have a long night ahead of us."

A long night it was. Hour after hour the policemen rode, stopping at every farmhouse — searching every barn or other building and even searching the haystacks and strawstacks, and the next day when they arrived at Edmonton, they were still empty-handed.

"I'm sorry, Inspector, but aside from the one man Carter caught, we haven't a thing to show for all our work." This from Parker.

"How did the men get away from you at Spencer's woods?" The Inspector seemed to be a little bit put out over that.

"I'll start from the beginning and bring the story right up to date." And Parker recounted in detail his every moment from the time he left Edmonton until he arrived back.

"And if you please, Inspector," he concluded, "how is Hughes?"

"The poor chap is badly bruised up. An inch nearer his temple and he wouldn't be here. He was given a severe beating and from his hips up he's one mass of bruises and cuts."

"How did it happen?"

"After the gangsters walked away from Downer Crossing, Hughes walked into the depot. It was so hot in the handcar house he couldn't stand it there, besides why hide there after the men were gone? He wanted a drink to cool off and get some food. The

operator gave him food from his lunch bucket and Hughes was just about to leave the depot to search that wood lot for anything the men might have dropped, when the five men entered. They knocked Carter over, searched the telegraph files, broke open the safe and after beating both men again, departed."

"A fine lot of white men!"

"So say I, sergeant. I know the Commissioner is disappointed at our lack of results, but no matter where those men are, we will get them, it may take a week, a month or even a year, but Rusty Blemmer and his gang are going to be ours!"

There was a rap on the door.

"Come in," ordered the Inspector.

The orderly entered.

"Here are the fingerprints, Inspector, also the record from Washington."

"Thanks. You may return to your duties."

"Yes sir."

"Well, Sergeant Parker, Carter got one of them anyway, Michael, better known as Lefty Consulto. Now then if we can only hang some of Blemmer's work on this man, we'll keep him a guest of the Dominion a while before turning him over to the States."

"What do they want him in the States for?"

"Everything but going to church. He has a record so long it's on two cards. Come with me and let's have a talk with the gentleman."

Lefty it was. But try though they might, they could not get a bit of information out of the man. He

wouldn't talk about Blemmer; denied even knowing him. There was a lot of work to be done before that man would be up for trial. There was plenty of evidence piling up against him — but, all circumstantial as yet and that is the one kind of evidence courts, especially Canadian courts, do not like.

When they returned to the office, Carter was there awaiting the Inspector.

"Anything new, Sergeant Carter?"

"Yes sir. I was down the street a block a few minutes ago when a farmer in a car stopped me. Said he was forced at the point of a gun last night to drive four men from his farm outside Saxony to the west end of Edmonton. I've sent five men out there to make a thorough search."

"Huh," exclaimed the Inspector, "that explains part of it. Those men have nerve coming into town when they know we are looking for them!"

"Inspector," replied Carter, "those men won't be found on the west side or any other part of Edmonton. I'm positive they got out of town as fast as they could after the farmer drove away."

"Hum-m-m. Maybe you're right, but it was good business to have the place searched for them. Where do you suppose the men went?"

"Inspector, I'm positive from the reports I've seen, and I think both of you will agree with me, that Blemmer intends to get into the Far North and the sooner we put out men to watch for them around Athabaska Landing and Peace River Crossing, the better. That's my suggestion."

“Parker, you’ll take charge of the search from this end, and Sergeant Carter, you want to go North, so I’ll just order you to Peace River Crossing to keep watch there and bring the men in. And remember, I want those men brought in soon.”

CHAPTER VII

"ONE"

HERE'S your supper, Lefty."

"Thanks."

"Nice pals you have, Lefty. They have an automobile ride from Saxony and let you come the best you can."

"Wot you mean?"

"Just what I said. Nice pals." Carter had taken the man's supper to him, and as prearranged with the Inspector, was going to try and wheedle some information from the man. The man had been warned at the time of his arrest and once later that any information he might give could be used as evidence against him. Further warning was not necessary.

There was a pause. "More tea?"

"Naw. I don't like tea. Got any coffee?"

"Sure. I'll get you some."

When Carter returned with the coffee, he again tried to get the man to talk. He met with little success.

"You copper's ain't got nuthin' on me. I wants a lawyer."

"All right, Lefty. Anyone in particular?"

"Naw, fetch me the phone book an' I'll choose one."

"All right, Lefty. After supper. What was the idea of killing old man Smythe? You're likely to swing for that."

"I didn't kill nobody."

"Who *did* kill the old man?"

"It was — say, I don't know nothin' about nothin'."

"Too bad, Lefty. Your chief squawked on a pal of his named Slater, and within a short time he'll be squawking on you. You can suit yourself whether you clear things up or not. You're the one to lose or win, not me."

"What you know 'bout Slater?"

"Just that he and Blemmer pulled a job, Blemmer alibied out of it and squawked to the police, throwing the blame on Slater and that man is still in the pen."

"Yeah? I heard he escaped."

"He did but was retaken, and he squawked on Blemmer, that's how the 'G' men found out where you men were."

"The dirty rat, the crook!"

"We'll have Blemmer's confession soon. I understand he has a lot of money on him, that he never divided with you men, maybe that's why you had to walk out of Saxony, perhaps that's why he rode. Maybe he'll get rid of all his men that way so he can have all the loot himself."

There was a pause. Lefty had a cup of coffee raised half way to his lips. He hesitated, then set the cup on the table. He took on a far-away look, his

mind was busy with past events. He hadn't received a penny of the loot, but Butch had. Everything was Butch and Blemmer. They even fled from the north Minnesota woods together. Blemmer was known as a "rat" by the underworld, yet there was something likeable about him — to his gang at least. Suddenly Lefty broke into a rage — he arose and paced the floor. The more he thought of it the more sure he was that Blemmer intended purposely to ditch him — that it was all a bluff, that he would be able to take care of himself better than the rest, and there was only room for four and the driver in the car.

Suddenly Lefty stopped short in his pacing. "Tell you what, copper, gi'me a break an' I'll tell you the truth."

"I can't promise anything, Lefty. But if you are willing to come clean with the truth we'll try to help you, but there is a life sentence staring you in the face, and if you had anything to do with the killing of old man Smythe, it's the noose."

"I'll tell you everythin'. Rusty Blemmer, the yellor rat, he'll ditch me, will he? He's a 'squawker,' but he ain't goin' to 'squawk' on me, I'll get to him first."

Carter sent for the Inspector, and for hours they listened to the story of Lefty, they asked question after question, all of which were answered. A stenographer took down all that was said, and when at last the story was finished, the Inspector asked:

"Lefty, what got you mixed up in all this?"

"Aw, bad company as a kid I guess. You know how

'tis, didn't like work any too well, got mixed up with some tough kids. That's all."

"Mother and father living?"

There was silence in the cell room. A silence so profound a pin fall would have sounded like the tolling of a bell. Then the gangster, yellow, steeped in crime, took his head in his hands and wept like a child. Carter and the Inspector left the cell block and returned to the office. "Send for the chaplain," was all the Inspector had to say as he passed the orderly. He and Carter entered the office and sat a long while in thought.

"One," said Carter. That was all.

* * *

Within an hour from the time Sergeant Carter's train arrived at Peace River Crossing the next day, he was seated in the office of Inspector Anderson, in charge of the detachment, which is located a couple of miles out of town.

"It's good to see you again, Sergeant. What are you here for?"

"You've had reports on the Blemmer gang, Inspector?"

"Yes, we have a stack of papers here. I understand you caught one of the men."

"Yes sir. There are reasons to believe the men will head into the North and, of course, we want to stop that and to get them into custody as soon as possible."

Carter proceeded to tell all he knew about the case and the plans for the capture. The Inspector admitted it was a big job, but expressed his opinion, that as the Mounties had always gotten their man, they would get Blemmer.

"And now, sir, I'm going to leave my uniform here, my revolvers and everything else belonging to the Force. I'm going to get into civilian clothes and go down the river. While the first steamer of the year will be sailing in a day or two, I'm going on ahead. Your men can watch out for the gangsters here."

"Evidently you don't expect them to stop here."

"I haven't formed any opinion on that, Inspector, but the fact is, if they happen to start from further up the river by boat and pass through here at night, and come upon me down river, it will be an easier job getting them than if I followed them."

"A good idea. I'll have one of the boys look up whatever you need, including arms without the police markings."

"I'm afraid you can't do more unless you have a boat without the police marks on it, and an out-board motor. I'll go into town and get what I need."

"Very well, Sergeant. We'll do whatever we can to help you. When do you wish to start?"

"I want to start off right after supper. I'd appreciate it if you would have a supply of food ready."

"You'll have that, Sergeant, as well as the boat and motor. See me before you go."

"That I will, sir."

Dusk had just set in when Carter, accompanied by Constable Dawson who knew the river well as far as Fort Fitzgerald, shoved off from the riverbank. They had a fair-sized boat equipped with an out-board motor, and it was loaded with a good supply of camping equipment, food, and arms. Both men wore the rough garb of hunters and trappers.

Nothing further had been heard from the gangsters and Carter was acting in accordance with his instructions from the Inspector, to use his own judgment. If he made a mistake, it would be just too bad, but with no clues to follow, it was up to Carter to do his best. Inspector Anderson and his men would be on the lookout at Peace River Crossing. There was no direction the gangsters could go in with so much security as to the North, the only question was, by what route?

The boat floated down the river in the dusk, with just enough power from the motor to make steering easy. It was 280 miles to the next town, Fort Vermillion. The Fort can hardly be called a town, it was a tiny village, with a grist mill, a trading post, and two or three other log buildings. It was not a very important place, for the Indians and white trappers who get as near as Fort Vermillion, prefer to paddle the remaining distance and do their fur trading at Peace River Crossing where there is a theater and "real life" for those who have been out of touch with the world for months or a year.

Carter wished to travel at night for two reasons. As soon as warm weather sets in, the many

mosquitoes make life miserable and make it necessary to wear netting over the face and gloves on the hands. By floating down river at night, one man could sleep while the other kept watch and steered, in that way it would not be necessary to go ashore where the mosquitoes were thickest, except during the day when the pests were not quite so numerous. But the principal reason for the night travel was that if there was a camp on shore, there would be sure to be a fire burning to smoke off the mosquitoes. If a campfire was seen, the boat would put to shore and an investigation be made by the policemen.

The Peace River is quite wide, but not very deep in places. There is good hunting along the banks and excellent fishing in the river. Three times during the night, campfires were seen. Each time it was necessary to shut off the motor so as to be as quiet as possible and row to the other side of the river to investigate. Two camps were those of Indians, the other that of a fur trader enroute to Peace River Crossing. As a result of losing so much time it was not until after dark the day following the departure from Peace River Crossing that Carter and Dawson reached Fort Vermillion. Long before they reached the landing, the chugging of the motor was heard and by the time they arrived at the village, the entire population of perhaps ten people were on the bank to welcome the policemen.

Mr. Williams, the fur trader, furnished sleeping quarters for the night. Before the men retired refreshments were served and the two policemen and

the trader enjoyed a talk over the condition of affairs in that territory.

"Big season for the trappers, Sergeant," remarked the trader.

"That's a good thing. The better the season they have the less trouble the police have. Whenever there is a dull year, thieving grows." Carter knew whereof he spoke. He had spent years in one of the finest fur countries in the world, the Mackenzie River Delta.

"We've had very little trouble for some time past. The white men and the Indians know that sooner or later the Mounties will get them if they commit a crime, so they obey the law, that is, most of the time."

"Seen any strangers about here lately? I'm looking for a party of four men."

"No, I haven't, but there's been a campfire opposite here every night for a week until tonight. I'll have a look." He went to the door and looked out. "No, no fire tonight."

"Maybe just some wood choppers, getting a supply of fire wood for the steamer."

"No, the wood has been cut since late in the winter. It's nothing to worry about though."

"When Constable Dawson returns to Peace River Crossing, he will be able to report all is well here, Mr. Williams?"

"Yes, no complaints and everything running smoothly."

"Is there anyone at Vermillion Chutes at this time of the year?"

"Yes, Sergeant. There are two men and a couple of Indians there, getting things ready to take freight and passengers over the portage as soon as the boat starts running."

"We'll make the fifty miles to the Chutes in the morning and then camp a few days, at least until the down-river boat arrives. In the meantime if there is anything suspicious about that campfire across the river or if the four men I am looking for stop here and cause any trouble, send an Indian for us."

"That I will, Sergeant."

Carter and Dawson were awake early the next morning and after a hearty breakfast set the nose of their boat down river again and by noon had reached Vermillion Chutes. Because of a waterfall that is low, but rocky, large boats cannot go over the chutes. Instead, all freight and passengers are conveyed about twenty miles across a portage to below the chutes, where barges towed by a tug with a gasoline engine convey the cargoes and passengers to Fort Fitzgerald, where Smith Falls again prevents steamers from going down river. Capable river navigators steer their small open boats and barges over the falls, but this requires men having a real knowledge of the falls and men who thoroughly understand the management of boats under adverse conditions.

When the boat tied up at the landing at the

Chutes, there was no one in sight, so Carter and Dawson unloaded their boat, pulled it up onto the bank and went into the log house erected for the purpose of sheltering passengers while awaiting transportation in one direction or the other, either across the portage or by boat up river. The place was being occupied, however, as could be seen by the food stored on the shelves, and the condition of the pots and pans. There was no telling when the caretaker might return, so Carter made himself at home, as is the manner in the North. Any open door is a welcome to the traveler.

Time passed slowly. Mosquitoes bothered the men, so they went outside and built a huge fire to smoke out the pests. They had scarcely finished building their fire, before they noticed another fire on the opposite bank of the river. Whether to investigate or not was a question in Carter's mind. Before he had made up his mind what to do, however, a boat pulled away from the opposite bank and a short time later two men stepped ashore and greeted Carter.

"Howdy. Name's Greenwald."

"How do you do. I'm Bill Carter."

"Glad to know you. This is Tim Ryan."

"How do you do? This is Mr. Dawson."

"Trappers?"

"Yeah! Trappers." This from Carter.

"Where'd you come from?"

"I was in the Arctic Circle last year. Going back," said Carter.

"Ever know Slim Willard up there?"

"Sure, he's been trapping in the Delta for ten years."

"You're O.K. I guess. We had some trouble a while back an' we ain't takin' no chances."

"What kind of trouble?"

"Met four men up river who said they were trappers from the North. We believed 'em, but then they started asking so many questions about the police an' things we knew they weren't on the square."

"Sounds kind of phoney," said Carter, "anything happen?"

"Nothin' serious, 'cept they 'most ate us outta grub. Then they gave my pardner a five hundred dollar United States bill fer his rifle, canoe, shotgun an' some other gear. But when we got to Peace River, the bank wouldn't take it an' we came near gettin' pinched."

"A tall man with stooped shoulders, well educated, reddish hair, thin face?" asked Carter.

"Say, that's him all right, did he git you, too?"

"Not yet, but I came near getting caught."

"Well, we'll meet him some day agin. But what we wants is some bacon an' flour. Got any?"

"Why not try the fur-trading post at Vermillion? We won't let you go hungry, but we have a long trip ahead of us."

"Okay, pardner. I just wanted to know if you'd offer any."

"As I said, I won't let you go hungry, but if you

can get it elsewhere, I'd appreciate it. There's a fur trader at Vermillion, fifty miles up river."

"That's all right, pardner, just wanted to see how you set."

There was something mysterious about the men, but Carter could see nothing wrong, and when a few minutes later the men started back across the river, he felt sorry he had not insisted upon them taking the food they spoke of. The thing worried him until late in the evening when the caretaker arrived. This man named Grant had been repairing the road across the portage all day in preparation for the steamer due any day now. His partner and brother, came in a short time later. Their two Indians had a camp a short way off and Carter did not see them that night.

"Had visitors this afternoon." Carter told the story, and concluded, "I'm sorry I didn't insist on them taking the food. I've been in the North too long to be other than hospitable."

"Say, Mister, those fellows have been scoutin' aroun' here for three weeks, since afore the ice went out the river. There's somethin' wrong about 'em."

"Well, we'll keep our eyes open."

But nothing developed, and two days later the steamer arrived at the Chutes. Blemmer and his gang were not among the passengers. The Captain of the boat, who lived in Peace River Crossing during the winter and knew Dawson, gave him a letter. It was from Inspector Anderson and enclosed a letter for Carter, informing him that a report had

been received that four men answering the description of Blemmer and his gang had been seen going down river in two large boats. No one had seen them pass Peace River Crossing, but the informant was a reliable man and Carter would do well to wait at Vermillion Chutes until the men arrived.

That was all, but it was enough to suit Carter. The Indian crew on the boat as well as the Indians working with the caretakers were busy handling the freight and stacking it on the shore, to be taken over the portage by team as soon as the boat was unloaded. There were but three passengers, fur traders going as far as Great Slave Lake.

Time dragged on the hands of the two policemen. There was no work for them to do, and no amusements. All day long they paced back and forth waiting for the arrival of the men they desired to arrest and end their long criminal records.

The boat departed as soon as unloaded. The passengers walked across the portage to await the scows, the caretakers started to truck the freight over the rough, dirt road cut through the forest, and all the two policemen could do was to eat, sleep, and wait.

The fur trader's boat would be back in ten days or two weeks. To wait that long would be torture, what with the delay and the hordes of mosquitoes, life would be next to unbearable.

The campfire across the river was not seen again. The passengers were at the other side of the portage. The caretaker, his brother, and the Indians were not good company, even when they were in camp.

Carter built a little tent with the mosquito netting he had brought with him, and inside there he and Dawson went over the case of the Blemmer gang time after time. They tried to figure out what they'd do if they were the pursued instead of the pursuers. And every time they formed a plan of escape, they came right back to the original idea of Carter's, that they would go North, via Peace River Crossing and go down river in a small boat and not by steamer, for the reason that there might be policemen as passengers on the boat who would most certainly make it their business to know who every man aboard was and might make some inquiries that would make a satisfactory answer most difficult.

"Well, Dawson, I guess all we can do is to wait here until something develops, but if we are wasting our time, I'll be a mighty disappointed man and will go back to Edmonton expecting something besides a blessing."

"Sergeant, you've been on the Force longer than I. I've made mistakes, but the worst reprimand I ever got was, 'Don't make the same mistake again.' "

"Sure, that's all right for you, but remember I am a veteran on the Force. I wonder if those gangsters have already passed here."

"Forget it, Sarge, have a feed, rest a while then go to bed. This lonesomeness and worry will drive us mad if we don't watch out."

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN CROOKS FALL OUT

IN THE camp of the gangsters on the opposite side of the stream a few miles above Peace River Crossing, things were not going smoothly. The nerves of the men were badly frayed by the strain of the past weeks of flight, and with the pursuit drawing near there were continual quarrels. The fact that Blemmer kept all the money, which denied any one of them the means of making a single-handed break, was the source of most of the fighting. While waiting for the first boat of the season to go down river, which they intended following, the men became impatient with their leader. They had Gyp act as spokesman, and as they finished a lunch he approached Blemmer.

"We want a split on that money, Rusty, and we figure now is a good time to settle up."

Rusty glanced slyly at the three men and thought to bully them. "Listen, you guys, I am the chief of this little outfit and I'll decide when the time is right."

"Well, just decide this. I want my share, and I want it now. Get me!"

"And that goes for me, too," came from Red.

"Yeah, Rusty," said Butch, "we want our share."

The crafty Blemmer knew his men well enough to know when a bluff would not convince them. He knew the time had come to divide, but he still wanted to make certain of his own position before doing their command.

"Can't you boys trust me any more?"

"Sure, and can't you trust us?" asked Red. "We earned our shares and we want them. If anything happens to you, and the money is picked up by the law, where do we get off? Besides the part due Lefty is split between the three of us, not four ways."

The chief glanced at Butch, his bodyguard, but could see that Butch was as set as the others on getting his money. With a shrug of his shoulders he sat down on a log. From various parts of his clothing, but chiefly from the lining of his vest and a money belt, Blemmer drew several packages of bills. Without a word he divided the entire amount. One part, Lefty's share, he divided among the three, and then picked up the two shares of his own.

"Okay, boys?"

"Okay," replied the three as they pocketed their shares.

"Now what? Do we break up or go on together?"

"Suit yourself, but if we go on, each does a share of the work."

"Why, what do you mean?" Blemmer asked glancing at the three.

"Meaning that you do your share of the work,

wood chopping and splitting and washing of the dishes."

"Who ever heard of such a thing. I furnish the brains and you do the work the same as before."

"From now on, no work no eats, and that's that."

The camp which, as stated, was on the opposite bank from the town of Peace River and about five miles upstream from there, had been rather inactive for several days. The men had not been able to devise a safe plan to get down river, and were fearful of going by the steamer. They had acquired a boat, outboard motor, and some supplies from a passing trapper but that was not enough. Red had been on an excursion or two into the country a few miles and had made the acquaintance of an Indian who claimed to know the country between Peace River Crossing and Fort Fitzgerald well. He knew where to camp, where supplies might be obtained, knew how to shoot the rapids at Vermillion Chutes and in many other ways be of assistance to the men on their way to the Far North.

Late in the afternoon of the day the men had made Blemmer divide the loot, dark smoke was seen coming from the fur-trading steamer tied to the dock in town.

"Look, fellows, look, they're getting steam up," cried Blemmer, all excitement.

"Now's our time to get busy," said Red, "we'll follow the boat down river, keeping far enough behind so we can't be seen and if there are any police aboard, they won't see us."

"That's the idea," said Blemmer, "better get that

Indian you spoke about. Offer him a hundred dollars for his boat, motor, and supplies and we'll give him another fifty bucks to get us to Fort Fitzgerald."

"What'll we do, pay him in the United States money we can't use?" Red made this inquiry.

"Of course," said Blemmer, "we can't use the money around here, and neither can he, and by the time he gets back to Peace River, we'll be too far away to be caught." There was a hearty laugh by all except Butch.

"Oh yeah? Say, promise the redskin anythin' an' when payin' off time comes give 'im nothin'." And he burst into a hearty laugh, joined by the others.

"I'll go after the Indian right away. There are only a few hours of darkness at night now, and I think we'd better leave here about eleven o'clock, and drift downstream on this side until we are past the police detachment and the city, then we can make as much speed as we want."

"That's right, boys," spoke up Blemmer, "we don't want to be chased on the last night we are here. And remember, don't make as large a fire as this noon or the smoke'll be seen at the detachment and someone may come over to investigate."

Shortly after ten o'clock that night the Indian had brought his boat to the bank below the camp and loaded it with a part of the supplies belonging to the gangsters. It was decided that as soon as they heard the steamer whistle, they would cast off and float down the river. Red and the Indian were to occupy the first boat which would have most of the supplies,

the others would use the second boat, in order that Butch might train his precious machine gun up river in case of anyone following them.

It was about midnight when the steamer whistle sounded, and the gangsters pushed their boats into the stream, headed down river toward Vermillion, and from there into the mysterious North where they hoped to find safety, peace for a while, then escape somewhere to spend their ill-gotten wealth.

The steamer, a stern-wheel, wood-burning type, with accommodations for only about twenty passengers, and a large amount of freight, keeps well to the east bank of the river all the way to Vermillion Chutes except at one point where it crosses over to the other side of the river to deliver freight and pick up furs from a post situated there. Other stops are made from time to time to load slabs of wood cut by Indians during the winter, and used as fuel for the furnaces. With the exception of the captain, cook, and engineer, the entire crew is made up of Indians, who work more for the pleasure of traveling than any other reason.

During the darkness, Blemmer's boats drifted downstream, past the police detachment, then past the village, the two points Blemmer was very much afraid of. As day dawned, they were viewing wilderness on both sides of the river. The steamer was not in sight, so the outboard motors were started, and a few hours later they sighted the steamer, which was crossing the river to the trade post on the west bank. It was then Blemmer had an idea.

"We'll stop at the post after the steamer pulls out. There's no telling what we may find there."

"You ain't got no sense, Blemmer. Better keep away. No tellin' but what the Mounties have a man there."

"What of it? If there is, we'll get back in the boats. Steer for the shore at the place where the steamer is, but keep as far back of the steamer as you can without losing sight of it."

Two hours later the steamer, having unloaded its small amount of freight, departed down river again. The boats of the men stopped below the bank near the post, and Butch and Rusty walked ashore. They were surprised to find only one man in sight.

"How's things, partner?" Blemmer tried to be friendly with the old trader.

"Fair to middlin'. How's everythin' with you and who are you?"

"Just a trapper going North. I'm after some food and fishing tackle."

"Better go back to Peace River for that. I don't sell nothin' for cash."

"Oh, is that so! Well, I told you what I want and I intend to have it. Make it snappy." The chief's manner immediately became surly.

"Say, young feller, I'm runnin' this post an' I run it as I sees fit. If you don't like my way of doin' business, get out. I don't like your looks anyway."

"Listen old sourface," spoke up Butch, "look at this an' speak again." He displayed two revolvers, one in each hand.

No sooner had he leveled the revolvers at the old

trader than a shot rang out, Butch yelled with pain. As Blemmer reached for his revolver, another shot rang out and the revolver dropped from the chief's hand, the door behind the counter opened and a girl stepped into the storeroom. She had shot through a peephole.

"Beat it," was all she said, and a minute later the two gangsters had reached the shore and were scrambling into their boat. The noise of the shots attracted the attention of several Indians in the woods near the post, and they ran toward the shore with rifles in their hands, shouting threats. The two boats lost no time in getting out of range. The girl had shot the revolver out of Blemmer's hand without injuring Blemmer. The wound sustained by Butch while painful for the time being was not severe. Gyp tried to find out what the trouble was all about and what happened, but neither Butch nor Blemmer would discuss the matter.

During the morning, the Indian's motor developed trouble, and the two boats went to the bank. A fire was made and a meal cooked while attempts were made to repair the motor. Red insisted that Blemmer and Butch explain what had occurred at the trading post, and finally Butch told the story. When the tale was completed, Gyp and Red laughed loud and long over a lone girl sending two armed gangsters running down the riverbank. Red poked considerable fun at Blemmer, a gangster chief, to be routed by a girl; Gyp plagued Butch. It was not long before both men were so angry they threatened

fight. This did not stop the banter, and before long, the four men engaged in a hand-to-hand fight, and for once in his long life, Blemmer showed mettle; he sailed into Red determined to show he was the best man; Butch was equally determined to beat Gyp, but when the battle ended, Blemmer and Butch were two badly beaten men.

"Blemmer, you can remain chief of this outfit," said Red, "but don't ever try anything on me again."

This affair made great changes in the future affairs of the gang. Blemmer no longer was consulted when there was work to be done, or plans to consider. Butch was no longer treated as a man to be afraid of; rather, the two men were tolerated and that was all.

When the meal was prepared, the four men ate with gusto, and when finished, Red ordered Blemmer to wash the tin dishes. Blemmer got Butch to do it for him. The motor could not be made to start, and so when they again set out, Blemmer's boat was in the lead and towed the other boat. Considerable time had been lost, and so they drove the boat as hard as they could far into the night, and the next day. On the following day they regained sight of the steamer, just as it pulled away from Fort Vermillion. After consulting with the Indian, it was decided they would attempt to get such supplies as they needed at the Fort, as that would be the last chance before arriving at Fort Fitzgerald. It had long been decided they could not risk going into Fort Fitzgerald as there was a police detachment there, but

if in need of supplies, would camp on the river below Smith Falls, just the other side of Fort Fitzgerald, and one man make his way into the settlement, and if it looked safe, to secure supplies or whatever they needed on the long trip into the North.

The boats drew up to the little landing stage at Fort Vermillion, an hour or so after the steamer had left, and with a list of the supplies needed, fishing lines, bacon, and a few other items, Butch went into the trader's accompanied by Blemmer. Butch was to do the buying, Blemmer to take the packages out as fast as prepared, and when the time came for payment, Butch was to draw his revolver. The men had no intention of paying out money for anything, besides they had mostly large bills, bills that could not be changed, even if the trader disposed to sell for cash, instead of trading for furs as is the custom.

"Hello," said the trader cheerily from behind the counter in the storeroom.

"Hello." Butch handed the list to the trader who adjusted his spectacles and checked over the various things.

"Sorry, I don't have anything but the bacon."

"Well, give us that!"

"I don't sell for cash. I only trade."

In the meantime Butch and Blemmer had their eyes open for any surprise attack such as they had up river. There was only one door, however, entering the storeroom, and that one was from the dirt walk leading through the tiny village. Blemmer

stepped to the door to look outside, to make sure there was no one to interfere and, seeing no one, he walked up to the trader and hit him square on the jaw with his fist.

"Take the things you want and get going, I'll take care of this mutt."

"Stick 'em up, strangers and keep 'em up." These words came from the door, toward which both Blemmer and Butch had their backs.

"Thank God it's you, Mr. Greenwald," said the trader.

"Yeah, and Ryan's here, too. Take their guns, Tim."

Before Blemmer or Butch could make a move, their revolvers had been taken from them, they had been searched, the money in their pockets taken from them, and then:

"Next time you try to cheat an' rob a fellow traveler or trapper in this country, count ten. This will take care of what you did to us up river."

"Who are these men, Greenwald?" asked the trader.

"Just a pair of crooks. There's two more down at the riverbank. Come on, Ryan, we will make for the timber before those other two find out our little game."

The two trappers who had met up with the gangsters before, moved to the door, richer by two guns and the money. As they went out the trader called to them to send some Indians in from the village for protection.

Turning to the two men, the trader made a suggestive gesture with the rifle he had taken down from the back counter. "Now get out of here, and stay out," he said.

Butch and Blemmer left the building, ran to the boats, and demanded that they set out immediately. Red, believing there had been trouble, wanted to go back and finish it, but Blemmer and Butch insisted it was better to start because the Indians would soon make an appearance.

In order to avoid the steamer, the boats were steered to the west bank of the river opposite Vermillion Chutes, and without a fire, the men camped there until after the steamer had departed. They suffered from mosquitoes, yet had to be satisfied. They were now getting into the North and began to sense what they believed was security for all time.

When the steamer departed up river, the boats again crossed the river. At first the Indian suggested he run the boats over the rapids. He had done that before and knew just what to do and where to find the right spots in order to avoid crashing on the rocks. The cowardly gangsters were in no humor for taking such chances. Instead they went to the portage where they saw the resthouse, huge stacks of freight, and two wagons being loaded by two white men and some Indians. Not knowing how many people might be on the portage, Blemmer wisely decided he would wait around a few hours and learn all there was to learn, and what they knew, before attempting to do anything.

"Hello, stranger," called Red to one of the white men, "how's chances to rest here awhile?"

"Got yer own grub?"

"Sure we have."

"Stay as long as you like, then."

A short time later the teams, the white men, and the Indians departed with two large loads of freight for the other side of the portage. When they had gone, Blemmer, true to his training, started to nose around the freight. Red went into the resthouse to see what he could find, and a short time later called to his pals that he had a swell meal waiting them. The men ate, and left their dirty dishes for the caretaker to attend to when he returned.

"Lots of stuff here, Red, but what can we do with it?"

"Leave it alone. If we can locate some more grub or guns and ammunition, we'll take it, but what will we do with all the other stuff?"

"It's no use to us, Red."

"Me want pay. Me want go to squaw," said their Indian guide who in his slow manner was beginning to realize what these men were.

"Oh, you want your pay, do you? Well here it is, you scum," and Blemmer knocked the poor Indian down with his fist. The Indian arose slowly to his feet. He walked from the house, down to the boat, and paddled his canoe up river. His destination was not home, but the Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment at Peace River Crossing. He knew they would follow these white men to the ends of the earth, if need be, in order to have justice done.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIGHT AT THE CHUTES

SERGEANT CARTER and Dawson met the steamer when it arrived at the landing, and remained there until the cargo was unloaded and the steamer started up river again. Around the large clearing that had been cut to provide a space for the resthouse, the log stable with its thatched roof and the space required for storage of the freight, was a dense forest. Because of several Indians encamped in the woods, Carter and Dawson decided to visit them and perhaps not only be of service but also do a little scouting. It was a long wait, with no assurance that Blemmer and his gang would visit the Chutes on their way to the North and no definite knowledge that the men would head North, even though it seemed there was no other direction for them to go in. Besides that, they might have been captured at Peace River Crossing or even before reaching there.

The steamer had scarcely left its mooring place, when through the forest came the sounds of an outboard motor on the river — the putt, putt resounding far and wide. Sounds travel a long way in that land of quiet, which is seldom broken save by the shots of hunters, or the cries of birds and beasts.

Walking to the edge of the forest, Carter saw the two boats coming toward the east bank of the river, and if he had been given a correct description of Blemmer and his gang, he felt sure when the boats were near enough to permit a good look at the men, that at last he was face to face with the four men his entire Force was looking for. With eyes ever on the men, and ears strained to catch every sound, Carter and Dawson saw and heard everything that has just been described except the beating of the Indian. As the Indian paddled away, the four gangsters left the resthouse and went in the direction of their boat, Carter and Dawson keeping out of sight among the trees.

"We can't take any chances, Dawson. Those men are heavily armed and there's no need of inviting trouble. We'll take our time and await favorable conditions to make the arrest."

"That's right, Sergeant. Say, that's a machine gun those fellows have in the boat."

"Nothing else but, Dawson. Funny they don't unload all their equipment if they intend going further down river."

"I have an idea they don't intend going over the portage but will just try to go around the rapids here. If they knew those whirlpools as well as I do, they'd prefer the long portage."

"Yes, but they don't know who is on the other side of the portage and they don't intend to take any chances." And Carter was right when he said this.

The gangsters shifted the supplies and equipment in their boat, evidently trying to make space for all to ride. Now, with the Indian and his boat gone, one more passenger and additional supplies would have to be carried in the one boat.

The mosquitoes were exceptionally busy that day, and it wasn't long before Blemmer and his partners sought the resthouse where mosquito netting kept the pests out. As they walked to the house, their loud cursing of the mosquitoes could be heard distinctly by the two policemen.

"Dawson, there's only one thing for us to do, and we're going to do it right now."

"What's that, Sarge?"

"I'm going to get down to the boat and get that machine gun. If Blemmer is looking out of the window he'll be able to see me, but if not, I can get that gun up here and we can put it to use."

"Don't take such a chance, Carter. We want those men but what good will it do us if you are shot up in trying to get them?"

"None, but what if they get that machine gun and use it? Here's what we'll do. You can keep out of sight behind this big pile of freight, and at the same time watch the house. Keep your rifle handy, and if any attempt is made to get me, don't be afraid to shoot, but shoot to maim, not to kill, I want those men taken in on their feet and not on a stretcher."

"I'll do that all right, old man."

"I'll get down to the boat and remove the machine gun and as much ammunition as I can, and

will cover the house as soon as I get my hands on that death-dealing gun. I'll get back to this pile of cases and bales, and with the machine gun, those men will be ours in no time."

"Okay, Carter. Good luck." With this Carter walked down to the riverbank, reached the boat, picked up the machine gun and four belts of cartridges, and was about to start back to where Dawson was hidden, when a man appeared in the door of the house, raised a rifle and fired, straight at Carter. The shot missed. At once the other men came to the door, but not before Carter had turned the machine gun toward the house, and squatting on the ground calmly fitted a belt of cartridges into the magazine. There was a shout from Blemmer and his men, and they raised either rifles or revolvers and aimed at Carter, but before a shot could be fired, Dawson aimed two shots at the men, one shot striking close to Blemmer, the other hitting the rifle held by Butch. The men retreated into the house. Carter moved the gun to the point of vantage used by Dawson and there the two men awaited developments for a few minutes.

"Ever shoot one of these things?" Carter, pointing to the machine gun, put the question to Dawson.

"Yes, and I'm considered a good shot with one."

"All right then, take care of this side of the house while I get around to the other side. There's one window those gangsters might get out of. I'll get among the trees and circle the clearing. We must keep those men there." And Carter, without any

further word or even waiting for a reply, took advantage of the pile of freight, which kept the gangsters from seeing him, and made his way among the trees and as quickly as possible circled the clearing. By this time, the short night was setting in. Carter could hear the teams returning from the other side of the portage — he heard the shouting of the men and the pounding of the horses' hoofs on the packed ground.

At the other side of the resthouse, Carter was soon in a position to command the lone window through which escape would be possible; Dawson commanded a view of the door on the west side and the windows on the south side. There were no windows on the east side. Carter had no sooner reached a point behind some big trees where he could see without being seen, before one of the gang started to crawl through the window. A shot from Carter's rifle stopped the man. As the teams drew near, Carter shouted a warning to the men, telling them that unless they were armed to keep away from the clearing.

Once Dawson fired a few shots from the machine gun, when the men in the house tried to get out the door of the building. Then all was quiet. Throughout the darkness, a brief period, a matter of but a few short hours, not a move was made by either side, and it seemed to be a question of who would have to give in first. Inside the house was water, food, and shelter from the millions of mosquitoes, but those outside, if they continued to

watch, must suffer thirst, hunger, and bites from mosquitoes, the latter being perhaps the greater suffering.

The dawn came, the sun rose high in the heavens. Noon, then afternoon came in slow succession, with no move from either side.

Then something happened. Butch walked from the door of the house, his hands raised high in the air — it was an unusual thing considering the fact there were four against two, but Carter accepted it as a sign of surrender. Cautiously he started toward the building, his rifle pointed toward the window, knowing well that Dawson would cover the door with the machine gun. When fifty feet from the rest-house, Carter called out:

"All of you into the open or I'll order the machine gun to rake the building. Come out with your hands in the air."

Almost immediately the four men were in front, with their hands up.

"Keep 'em covered, and move this way with the machine gun," the Sergeant called to Dawson, and soon the four men were being approached by the two policemen, covered by a machine gun and Carter's rifle. He also had two revolvers ready for action.

"Drop your guns, men," Carter ordered. "Remember, one false move and we'll shoot."

The gangsters tossed their revolvers and rifles on the ground, and still covering them, the two policemen approached the gang, and prepared to shackle them. But Carter and Dawson miscalculated their

ability, or else Blemmer was a little too shrewd for them, for no sooner had shackles been put on Blemmer and Butch, they being shackled together with one pair of handcuffs, then the other two turned on the policemen, and grabbing their rifles and revolvers from the ground, started to beat the two policemen unmercifully, assisted by the two others. The two policemen were no match for the men, even though Blemmer could use but one arm, his right, and Butch his left, because of being shackled together.

Loud shouting of the men caused the caretaker and the Indians to come to see what was the matter. Seeing their friends, two Scarlet Riders, getting considerably the worst of it, the two white drivers ran to their trucks, got their rifles and as they returned, fired at the fighting men. Butch went down, dragging Blemmer with him. The Indians, always the best friends to the Mounted Police, shouted and as the white men shot, the gangsters believed there was a large number of men coming to the rescue. Gyp and Red ran for their boat; Blemmer and Butch tried to arise, but Carter and Dawson although badly beaten, struggled with the men and kept them down. The gangster's boat got away and started down river toward the rapids. The policemen assisted by the drivers and Indians got to their feet, and still being helped by the men of the portage, got Blemmer and Butch inside the building.

Carter then went outside. He had been badly

pounded and was sore from head to foot. He walked slowly toward the riverbank, and saw the two escaping men being tossed about in their boat, successfully going over the rapids. If they reached the bottom alive, the chase was still on, if not — the case was ended. The ringleader Blemmer and his lieutenant Butch were properly arrested. Carter "got his man," or rather two of them.

"Dawson, we must get ready to go up river as soon as we've had something to eat. I'll get an Indian to go down river to Fort Fitzgerald and notify the police there that two men escaped."

Two hours later, with an Indian enroute down river in a boat having an outboard motor, with a letter to the Inspector in charge of the police at Fort Fitzgerald, and prisoners fed, Carter walked Blemmer and Butch to his boat. The caretaker and his helpers were more than glad to see the police and the prisoners leave — their life was usually quiet, peaceful; they did not welcome shooting and fighting around their camping grounds.

"I have just a word of warning for you two men," said Carter when the men were seated in the boat. "You'll be treated the same as you treat us. If you cause trouble, you can expect the same. Behave yourselves, and you will be treated with consideration. I promise you rest and food. There will be no long, forced traveling if you do not consider yourselves able to stand it."

"Yeah? Say, you big flatfoot, you'll never git us into no jail," blurted out Butch.

"Cast off," Carter ordered, and Dawson hastened to obey. A few seconds later and the outboard motor was humming a merry tune and the boat was enroute up river to Peace River Crossing, the first stage of the journey that should land Blemmer and his lieutenant in jail for life.

The two prisoners gave very little trouble. Carter saw to it they had rest and plenty of food, such as they had. The men ate little, however, and slept little during the 330 miles up the river, bucking the strong current. The second day out a heavy downpour of rain sent the men ashore, where they had some shelter under a large piece of canvas carried in the boat. Carter tried to engage his prisoners in conversation, but they had little to say. Being handcuffed together, they were ever close enough to carry on a conversation in whispers and because they were shackled, Carter paid little attention to them. Surely, two men chained together, could do little or nothing in the way of making an escape when there were two policemen in charge of them.

When they resumed their journey, Carter filled the tank of the motor with gasoline and noticed the can was then empty, meaning there would not be enough gasoline to take them as far as Peace River Crossing, so he kept close to the shore watching for an Indian camp, for most Indians have outboard motors, and would be only too glad to loan gasoline to the Scarlet Riders. But they saw no camps, in fact not a human being aside from themselves after leaving Vermillion Chutes. However, Carter did

better than he thought he would. He managed to get within five miles of Peace River before it became necessary to use the oars. Pulling a heavy boat upstream is no easy job at any time, and the strong current of the Peace River greatly tasked the two men. Finally, after a stiff struggle, they were forced to give up.

"We'll pull to the shore, Dawson, and walk into town. I'll get the boat tomorrow." They headed for the east bank and soon had the boat tied to a tree trunk, where their equipment and supplies were unloaded.

"Go into town, Dawson, and phone the detachment to send a wagon. Don't lose any time and tell the men to hurry. We want to get these men locked up and get our supplies to safety."

"All right, Sergeant," said Dawson and he was off to the village.

They were about two miles out of town, in a dense woods, and close to what is known as Indian Village. As Dawson came to this village he asked an old Indian to go to where Carter was and give him whatever help he might need. Dawson, when he reached town, made the telephone call, and was told a policeman would leave at once with the wagon. A half hour later the wagon rumbled up to the store from which Dawson had phoned, Dawson got into the wagon and went with the driver to guide him to where he had left Carter. They arrived at the spot all right, but Carter and his prisoners were nowhere to be seen! They loaded all the supplies

and equipment in the wagon, and then went in search of Carter.

It was some minutes before they found Carter, lying on the ground, insensible, and a large gash on his head. The policemen noticed that he had been dragged from where Dawson had left him. It was some time before Carter regained consciousness. He had been badly mauled. Dawson, in the meantime had started a search for the two prisoners, and two or three rods from where they had found Carter came upon the handcuffs with which Blemmer and Butch had been shackled. Dawson hastened back to Carter.

"Come on, Sutton, get Carter in the wagon, and drive as fast as you can into town, those prisoners have escaped and we must comb this country all night until we find them. They are desperate men and will stop at nothing."

"Righto, Dawson," responded the policeman and half an hour later the entire force at Peace River detachment with the exception of one man attending Carter, looking after the office routine, and answering the telephone, were searching the countryside for the escaped gangsters.

Throughout that night and two days and nights following, the search continued, and then other important work drew some of the men from the chase. But throughout the Dominion, every policeman had his eyes open for Blemmer and his gang.

When Carter came to, he was most chagrined. He wanted to get up at once and join in the search but

the doctor's orders were that he should remain quiet for at least a week.

"What'll happen to me now, I wonder, and where are those men?" Carter asked of Staff Sergeant O'Connell, temporarily in charge of the detachment.

"That's hard to tell, Sergeant. But tell me, just what happened the other night?"

"O'Connell, I don't know. The two men seemed to pay little or no attention to me after Dawson started for town, and as they were chained together I didn't pay a great deal of attention to them. Blemmer and Butch had been searched and I had everything they possessed in a wooden box I had originally used for storing food aboard the boat."

"Their money, too?"

"Yes. Everything they had."

"There was no money in the box, or anything else belonging to them when we searched the boat and the supplies."

"I might have guessed that. Well, this fellow Blemmer is a sly old fox. I knew that and so was careful of what I did. My two prisoners were seated on a fallen tree. Blemmer asked for a drink and I walked toward where the water jug was, but just as I got in front of the men, I tripped and fell. That is all I remember until I awoke here."

"And when you were found," said O'Connell, "your pockets were inside out, your keys gone, also your revolver and every bit of ammunition, two

rifles and two revolvers and the money Dawson said was there when he left to telephone us."

"I hate to think of what the Inspector will have to say about this."

"You're not the first policeman to lose a prisoner, Carter, and you will not be the last. Of course you'll hear about this, but there won't be any trouble."

"What's the latest news of the escaped men, Sergeant?"

"There is no news of any kind. We have searched day after day, but cannot find the men. We can't even find a trace of them. And by the way, two bad men from eastern Canada, of whom we were warned, flew to Fort McMurray, and got across to here; we were notified they were in the vicinity, but when we went to get them no leading trace could be found."

"Who were they?"

"Two former members of the Blemmer gang who, as we understand from the Federal Bureau of Identification at Washington, have sworn to get Blemmer. Maybe they've joined up and the chase won't be a long one for us after all."

"Old enemies meet again I suppose."

"That's it. Two friends of a man named Slater against whom Blemmer had given evidence and got locked up for twenty years."

"Seems to me I remember something of that."

"Okay, Sergeant, and remember this. Be quiet until Sunday and the doctor will let you up. Good night!"

CHAPTER X

FORT FITZGERALD

FORT FITZGERALD is an important village. At this place, because of the amount of valuable trade goods and furs stored there from time to time, a large police detachment is kept. Three different trading companies have built storage buildings here; each company has teams to haul freight over the twelve-mile portage around Smith Falls, and there are a number of log houses which provide shelter for the few white men and the Indians who are employed in handling the merchandise and furs. Boats, coming down both the Athabaska and Peace Rivers, stop at Fort Fitzgerald. Freight is reshipped to posts on Great Slave Lake, some to posts on the Mackenzie River as far north as the Delta, and some even to posts on the Arctic Ocean. It is a busy place in the summer, filled with the clangor of work, the noise of men, and the hum of mosquitoes. The railroad is 540 miles to the south, and from civilization to Fort Fitzgerald and further north, one must travel by boat in the summer and dog team in the winter.

One night, a few days after the fight at Vermilion Chutes, an Indian shoved the nose of his boat

up on the sandy edge of the riverbank at Fort Fitzgerald. He tied the boat and prowled up the path toward the police detachment. On his way he met an old friend, an Indian known as Rex McDonald, the guide and interpreter for the police.

"'Lo Rex, me Big Feather."

"Hello, Big Feather, what you do here?" Rex had been educated at the Mission Indian School at Hay River and was a very intelligent and interesting man.

"Me see police. Me got letter from Bill Carter."

"Big Feather not smart. You must say Sergeant Carter. Now, come with me," and the two trudged off laughing and talking together.

A few minutes later Rex ushered Big Feather into the office of the Inspector. Big Feather handed over the letter Carter had written and the Inspector read it carefully. He asked a few questions of the Indian messenger and then:

"Rex, see that Big Feather has food and a comfortable place to sleep. When the gasoline boat goes up river with the scows, have the captain tow Big Feather's boat as far as Vermillion Chutes."

"Yes, Inspector."

"That's all for now, except on your way out send in the Sergeant."

The Indians departed and a few minutes later the Sergeant reported to the Inspector.

"I have a report from Sergeant Carter that he has captured the chief and one man of the notorious Blemmer gang."

"Good for Carter, sir. He's a fine policeman."

"According to the reports received a couple of days ago, you may recall there are four members of the gang still at large. One was arrested and is in jail at Edmonton."

"Yes sir, I recall that."

"The four men were at Vermillion Chutes. Two of them got away from Carter and the constable with him, and headed down river."

"That means headed this way."

"Exactly, except I do not believe the men will dare to come to Fort Fitzgerald, I believe they will cross over the river and go around Smith Falls there."

"Afraid of being seen, I suppose, sir. Well, there hasn't been a stranger seen around here for a long time."

"I am aware of that. I want you to get as many men as you can spare to search the opposite side of the river. Go south a few miles and look for camps that have been used recently. Have two or three men start down river."

"Yes sir. I understand what you want."

"Were you across the portage today?"

"Yes sir."

"How is the work progressing on the new police schooner for Herschel Island?"

"The boat builders from Peace River are about through. The engine men, here from the factory, told me that they would tune up the engines tomor-

row, and would try to turn the boat over to us within two or three days."

"Get the men spread out and make a thorough search. I understand two policemen will be here on the next scow to go North on the schooner. I want you to locate a good pilot to take them down river. Take care of your orders at once."

"Yes sir."

Two hours later, five policemen were searching the east bank of the river for the two escaped criminals. They had little success, although they did find two camps that had been used recently, but found nothing to indicate who might have used the camps or in what direction the men had gone. The sergeant went so far as to send a power boat down river, watching for camps. This work was done chiefly during the short nights in order to locate the men by their campfires.

The down-river boat that made one trip a year to the Mackenzie River Delta had gone down river two days before Big Feather arrived at the detachment. Had it not been for that, a policeman would have gone with the steamer to watch for strangers. Two days later, the search was discontinued, and the same day two policemen, a sergeant and a constable, arrived on a scow to take the new police schooner down to the Delta, deliver it to the Inspector and remain in charge of that boat and assist in the running of the larger boat in the summer, besides doing the regular police work and making patrols in the ten months of winter.

The Inspector warned them to keep their eyes open for the two gangsters, and when the power schooner set out after casting loose at Fort Smith, as the northern end of the portage is known, the two policemen found that instead of what they expected would be a vacation was indeed more police work. The schooner was plentifully supplied with food and everything necessary for themselves, their Indian pilot, and crew of two more Indians.

Instead of pushing the schooner along as would have been done under other circumstances, the men got up no more speed than would enable them to keep a careful watch of both shores of the river. For more than 800 miles they continued — down the river to Great Slave Lake, across that and into the Mackenzie River, sighting little villages every couple of hundred miles, before they caught up with the clumsy, heavily laden fur trader's steamer. Because of it being necessary to stop at all villages to unload trade goods, and often between villages to load firewood, the steamer could not make as good time as the police schooner which made no stops except at the villages to inquire about the two gangsters. As the schooner drew close to Fort Norman, the policemen saw the steamer tied to the riverbank unloading freight. They drew alongside, made fast to the side of the steamer and went aboard. They looked about, but saw no one except the Indian crew. Then they walked ashore and saw the captain, cook, and engineer talking with the fur trader, and near by

three white men. The sergeant talked to the captain, asking about his passengers.

"Just three, sergeant. Two men got on at Fort Providence, going to Herschel Island to open up the mission there again, one is the Reverend Patterson, the other man, the hard-looking gentleman, the one standing beside the tall man with the reddish hair, is his servant. That other man over there is a scout for a large fur-trading company in the eastern part of the United States and is looking over the country with the intention of opening up a few trading posts."

"That's all I want to know, Captain. I'm going down river again as soon as we get aboard our craft. See you at Fort McPherson."

"Aye, and good luck to you."

"Thank you, sir."

The two policemen boarded their craft and started down river again, another five hundred miles through the wilds. They saw nothing to indicate the presence of the men they sought. They did see many wild animals on the banks, and many water fowl.

* * *

The author, working at his customary job, had tuned up the engines of the patrol boat at Herschel Island, and with the Inspector, sailed for Fort McPherson in order to be there when the down-river steamer would arrive. It was the first week in July

when we cast off from our mooring spot at the island for our first trip of the season. Both the Inspector and myself, since being informed of the new patrol boat, were anxious to see the craft.

We had been tied to the bank of the Peel River below the police-detachment buildings for four days waiting for the steamer or our new schooner. Both seemed late to us, because our spring had been a bit advanced that year. The Inspector was getting worried, and then one day during our evening meal which we were enjoying by the light of the midnight sun, I heard the putt, putt of a gasoline motor.

"It's the new police boat coming up river," I said to the Inspector.

"And how do you know that?"

"Listen to the exhaust. You never heard that steady hum before. That's from a six-cylinder engine — from two of them in fact. There's not a boat around here with two high-speed six-cylinder engines."

"Does sound different," said the Inspector.

The noise came from a long way off, and there is a bend in the river which we knew the boat was rounding. No time was lost in hoisting our own flag in front of the detachment buildings, the missionary raised his and so did the fur trader. Later when the boat pulled alongside our patrol boat, every member of the small population of the Fort gave the new arrivals a rousing cheer, and they in turn blew blast after blast on the Klaxon horn which replaced the whistle.

It was only a matter of minutes before the Sergeant, the other policeman, and the crew were at the detachment having their first northern meal, consisting of wild game, dehydrated potatoes and other vegetables, dehydrated fruits, and canned butter on bannock.

We talked long that night, or day, whichever you wish to call it in a land where there is daylight twenty-four hours a day. We were given all the details of events for months past, including that of the Blemmer gang.

"So a new missionary is coming. What kind of man is he?" The Inspector was curious, because the mission on the island had been closed for two years and he wanted to know just what kind of a new neighbor he was to have.

"Seems rather decent from the little I saw of him. Talks like an educated man, and he appears well equipped. Now, that man servant of his, say, he's about the toughest looking man I ever saw. He does not impress me."

The Inspector arose and stretched, then said, "You fellows make yourselves at home while Bill and I go down and inspect the new boat."

We decided after a thorough inspection that the schooner was more than we had expected. It was comfortable, with every possible convenience for the men sailing it, and the two powerful engines would give all the power necessary for any emergency, especially as the only ocean voyage it was expected to make was between the Delta and Herschel Island in the Beaufort sea, and on the rivers.

Three days later the steamer arrived and there was more cheering and raising of flags. Two passengers stepped ashore, the two men the Sergeant told us about as being the new missionary and his man servant.

Because of the checking of the police freight and mail bags as they came from the steamer and checking it onto my own patrol boat, I did not have a chance at first to notice the two passengers. The steamer remains but a few hours at McPherson. First, all the freight for that trading post, Herschel Island and Akklavak are unloaded, and then the bales of furs from those posts are loaded, all of which is done in a few hours' time. Then the boat departs, not to be seen again until the following year.

At last my work was completed and I went to the detachment to notify the Inspector that all was in good order and I could sail as soon as he desired.

"All right, Bill. I'm going over the island in the new schooner. Because of the whaler expected this season and the Russian fur trader returning, I want to get back as soon as possible. Better let us have your pilot. You don't need him for the run to Akklavak and Shingle Point."

"That's all right with me, Inspector," I said.

"By the time you get to Herschel, I'll have the Sergeant lined up on his work, and you can take him to Coronation Gulf with you and break him in so he can take charge in an emergency."

"That's an idea, Inspector. Well, no use wasting any more time here. I'm ready to cast off right now."

"Just a minute, Bill. Come into the other room. I want you to meet our new neighbors. Reverend Patterson, this is Bill in charge of our Arctic patrol boat."

We exchanged greetings and shook hands. The man was tall, rather good looking and had reddish hair. He wore the conventional clerical garb, even though he should have known better. He was the only man with a collar on and a coat. I mentioned the matter, but he said he was accustomed to dressing that way and would continue even though he was indeed uncomfortable from the heat.

"And this," said the Inspector, "is Mr. Lawrence, Reverend Patterson's secretary, companion, and I don't know what all."

Mr. Lawrence and I shook hands. He didn't say a word. He was a hard-looking man, and to me looked more like a thug than many I had seen, but I knew that the men had had their papers examined by the Inspector before the boat departed down river and the mere fact that they were still at McPherson was evidence everything was in order.

"These gentlemen want to go to Herschel Island, Bill. I would take them on the schooner, but by the time I load up the supplies I am taking from here, and get my prisoners and witnesses aboard, there won't be room for another passenger. You'll take care of them, will you?"

"Yes sir. Now, Reverend Patterson, if you'll be good enough to come down the bank to my boat as soon as you are ready, we'll cast off and start for

Akklavak and Shingle Point, then out to sea for Herschel Island."

"We'll be right with you. We haven't much luggage."

"Johnny," I called to my Indian interpreter, "tell my pilot he's to go on the schooner and then carry the Reverend Patterson's bags aboard the patrol boat."

"Me do."

Had I but known what strange adventures I would run into during the next few days, I would never have been so anxious to have hurried the Reverend and his servant aboard, and if the Inspector had but known who Patterson really was and how he happened to be a missionary, we would have saved ourselves hours of anxiety, bitter hand-to-hand fighting, and would have accomplished in a few minutes what later took days.

We cast off and started down the river. Our first stop was at Akklavak, a fur-trading post, or rather two posts, a Hudson Bay man on one side of the river and a rival company on the other. Two log houses in addition to the trading posts are on each side. A small, not at all inviting place, but it grew later into importance and when a hospital was erected, it became the headquarters of the Inspector of the area. A small short-wave broadcasting station was erected later and here, Colonel Charles Lindbergh and Mrs. Lindbergh were fogbound several days when enroute in their airplane for the Far East; then Akklavak was heard of around the world.

CHAPTER XI

PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS

HOW long does it take to get to the coast, skipper?"

"Oh, ten or twelve hours from here," I replied. Patterson was on the deck with me. He had been much interested in all that was going on. We had stopped at Akklavak, and from time to time at little resthouses maintained by the police for refuge during the winter. Each little shack is inspected to see that there is a sufficient amount of firewood, shavings, oil for the lamp, and canned food, so that the weary wayfarer caught in a storm or bitter cold, will be able to have warmth and food within a few minutes after he enters the shack.

I rather disliked this Patterson. He was polite enough, but was too inquisitive to suit me. He also complained of the food, which struck me as being rather bad taste, considering he was not paying for the trip or the food he and his servant ate. Another thing I didn't like was the way he was constantly shifting his eyes from one man or object to another. He did this slowly and deliberately.

The man servant was more disliked than his master. His shifty eyes reminded me of criminals

I had had contact with in the past. I could not warm up to him even though I tried hard to do so. He was constantly watching me, and I didn't like that. He seldom spoke, and then only in monosyllables.

The two men had their berths near the bow of the boat. Their baggage consisted of a small trunk and two traveling bags, not much for two men going into the Far North for two or three years, but they, being missionaries, could secure what they wanted from the traders, and I had noted several large cases and bales of goods marked for them, among our freight. They could live comfortably most likely, and I hoped would have little to do with me.

"What is all this freight you have aboard?" Reverend Patterson was in an inquisitive mind as we ate our dinner.

"I have several tons of food, ammunition, books, phonograph records, magazines, in fact everything required by the police on the Island and detachments further north, also supplies for any distressed natives. You see among other duties, we are the poor agents."

"Oh, I see. And there is but one white man aboard beside your good self, captain?"

"That's right. He's a special constable, not one of the regular police. He looks after the engines when I am too busy on deck to do so." I arose from the table with that last answer. I was growing tired of my new neighbors and I had known them but a few hours.

When we reached the mouth of the river and put

out to sea for Shingle Point, I felt uneasy. I cannot describe my feelings. Of course there was a lot of ice to watch out for, bergs and floes that must be avoided, and my Eskimos could not be thoroughly relied upon. I was responsible for them, what they did and for the safety of my passengers and the ship. I did not fear the responsibility, but there was something in the air that troubled me. We made Shingle Point without any difficulty. I transacted my business there and then put out straight to sea for Herschel Island.

Hours later, when Herschel Island came into view, Mr. Patterson joined me on deck. He had been talking to the Eskimos. I did not see Mr. Lawrence.

"Just what part of the island are the buildings on?" asked the Reverend.

"On this side. There is a large natural harbor there, and the entire village, three police buildings, two mission buildings, two fur-trader buildings and three or four log huts for natives are all on the low part of the island, which is this side. The village is on the beach, but far enough back from the water to be protected in a storm."

"Lawrence," called Mr. Patterson, "come on deck and get a view."

Lawrence joined us a moment or two later. I was at the left of the pilot, Lawrence stood beside him and Mr. Patterson stood at my right.

"And Alaska, where's that from here?" Another question from the Reverend.

"Around the island and straight ahead a few hundred miles."

"That's fine, skipper old boy, and that's where we're going." I turned, only to find Patterson with a revolver in his hand, the muzzle close to my ribs. I looked the other way, and Lawrence had a revolver in his hand, ready for action.

"What's the meaning of this?" I demanded.

"It means that you're taking this ship to Alaska."

"Oh, it does, does it? Do you realize this is piracy on the high seas, that you can swing for it?"

"Oh, can I? Now keep your mouth shut and do as I say. Steer around that island."

"I'll see you hang first." I said it as if I meant it, and I did.

"Look here, Mountie, we aren't going to that island, we're going to Alaska, and you're taking us there."

"All hands on deck," I called. It was the last call I made for several hours; both the Reverend and his servant swung at me, knocked me to the deck and I was completely out of the picture. I had met my first real defeat as a member of the Scarlet Riders.

* * *

When I came to my senses, I was on the deck, flat on my back. I could hear voices, indistinctly at first and then little by little everything cleared up. I opened my eyelids just a little, and saw the Rev-

erend and his servant standing about three feet away from me. They were talking, and bit by bit their conversation reached my ears:

"I tell you, Gyp, there's no use trying to make it ourselves, we've got to get this Mountie skipper out of his trance and make him take us through this ice."

"Aw, Red. What's a little ice? Say, I seen more ice than this on Lake Michigan."

"Yeah? Well get this. We don't know where we are and we don't know anything about ships."

"Naw, but the Eskimos do."

"Get a bucket of water and throw it on the skipper."

With that I groaned a little and raised myself on one elbow and looked about me. The two gangsters, for that is who they were, Gyp and Red of the Blemmer gang, dragged me to my feet rather roughly.

"Hey, you, get us out of this ice!"

"You stole the ship, suppose you put it back where you got it," I replied.

"Where are we heading for?" Red spoke up rather roughly.

"Looks to me like we're heading straight for Banks Land."

"Where is that?" Red demanded.

"It's a big slice of land that is icebound three years out of every four."

"Well, get us away from here."

"Listen you, I know who you are now." I was fast regaining my self-confidence. "You slipped one

over on us but you aren't fooling me any more. You got us into this scrape, and you can't get out of it. So what about it?"

"So you know who we are do you?" snarled Red.

"Of course, you are two of the Rusty Blemmer gang."

"And what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know yet, Red, but unless you and I are to spend three or four years in the ice, with the temperature forty or more below zero ten months a year, we'd better get out of this ice and head in the opposite direction."

"Take charge of this ship!" Red thundered. He was becoming worried about the situation and wanted to get away from the ice fields.

"All right, but on one condition. I am the only man on this ship who knows anything about navigation. I am the only one who can get the ship out of this fix. If I take charge again, I do so with the understanding, I am in charge."

"Go ahead, skipper."

"Yeah, an' don't forget we don't head for any island," said Gyp.

The Eskimos are of little use as sailors, they cannot work without their every move being supervised, and they had been so badly scared by the two gangsters they were panicky. As soon as I started to issue orders, they regained some of their coolness, and before long we were working in harmony again.

"Stop," I telegraphed to the engine room. The ship stopped.

"Lower a boat," I called to the natives on deck. They started to lower away as ordered.

"Say, what's that for?" demanded Gyp.

"If I'm in charge I don't answer for any acts to anyone, but for your information, I want to see how the propellers are, and to clear the ice away from the stern of the ship."

"Leave the skipper alone," said Red, "he knows what he's doing."

When the boat was in the water, I got into it and pushed the boat to the stern. The ice was packed close, due to the fact that the wind was blowing in the direction of the ship's stern. But the ice was not thick or heavy around the propellers so when I returned to the deck, I again ordered the engines started and we slowly headed into the ice, all the time turning, so that finally we again were headed toward Herschel Island.

We could proceed only at slow speed because of the ice fields and it required skillful maneuvering to get out of the ice into open water and at the same time not injure the propellers. But in a few hours we were free of the ice and could see Herschel Island in the distance. The ice was packed north of the island for miles, as I could see through the binoculars. It was evident we could not get through or rather past the island there, but I knew that there was no ice between the island and the mainland. If the two gangsters didn't think about that stretch of water, my troubles would be over, but there was no such luck for me.

"Head away from the island," demanded Red.

"What's wrong with you anyway?" I asked.

"I don't want that boss of yours to see this ship. We're going to pass the island between the other end of it and the mainland."

"As you will, but remember what I said before, you are guilty of piracy on the high seas, and you'll surely swing for it."

I was unarmed. I had revolvers and rifles in my little cabin, but there was no way of getting them. My brain was working fast, I must get the upper hand of the men if at all possible. For a long time both Red and Gyp walked about with their revolvers in their hands, more than likely afraid of the many poor unarmed Eskimos. Then after we had covered some distance and were nearing the clear water between the island and the mainland, I saw Gyp put his revolver in his hip pocket, and noticed that Red had done the same. They had found the bulky firearms in their way, and as the crew was no longer in a state of fear, which had been interpreted as a state of rebellion, the need of the arms was no longer there; besides, the two men felt I was so completely in their power, they didn't need the firearms.

I kept my eyes on the man at the wheel, giving directions from time to time, and at the same time watched the two men. Red told Gyp he was going for something to eat and to keep his eyes open, and went into the galley. No sooner had he gone out of sight, than I had the opportunity I had been waiting for. Gyp was watching the island, which was so

far away all that could be seen was the huge, high hill behind the settlement. To look at the island, he had his face away from me. Being in moccasins, I made no noise as I made two swift steps to the side of the gangster, and I raised my fists, landing one hard right blow on his left jaw. He fell with a groan. I took his revolver from his pocket and saw that it was fully loaded.

It was half an hour before Red came from the galley, and in the meantime Gyp had been tied hand and foot. So far as he was concerned, there was nothing more to worry about.

As Red came on deck, he called out, "Come and get your feed bag, Gyp," and started toward where I was standing beside the pilot at the wheel. Knowing he would see Gyp on the deck, I was prepared for whatever Red might decide to do, but I was just a little bit ahead of him. I raised my revolver and shouted, "Stick 'em up and keep 'em up!" Red paid no attention, he looked at me and at the figure of his partner on the deck, and then ran to the side of the ship and jumped overboard.

"Stop!" I signaled the engine room. "Lower the boat," I called and leaped over the side of the ship into the water, and swam toward the spot I had seen Red last. A moment later I saw his head as he came up, and in another moment I had him locked in my arms, but Red was a game one. He fought with all his might. Both of us were good swimmers and managed to keep afloat all right, but it was hard work for both of us — and then I saw a raised arm, Red

had his revolver in his hand again and made a lunge to hit me over the head, but I was a little too quick for him, and laid him out instead. A minute or two later the boat was alongside and Red was soon aboard the ship, in irons, slowly recovering from the blow I had given him.

"Half speed," I signaled to the engine room. In a couple of minutes, "Full speed," and directed the pilot to steer for the Island harbor, and I went to my cabin and changed clothes.

"Hey, Bill, where in Sam Hill have you been?" called the Inspector to me from the shore as we pulled into the harbor — a beautiful deep, natural harbor — of Herschel Island.

"I'll tell you when I get ashore," I shouted back, the noise of the engines almost drowning out our voices. "And say, Inspector, get ready for a big surprise."

A surprise it was when I took my prisoners ashore and explained who they were. After the unloading of the freight had been attended to, as well as the various other duties attendant to the arrival of the ship, we had our first talk with the prisoners in the little detachment office.

"And the charge, Bill?"

"Piracy on the high seas."

"Humph," grunted the Inspector, "that's a hanging offense in any man's country."

"Yes sir," I replied, "but what about these men being wanted for murder in Alberta?"

"I'm thinking about that at this minute, Bill."

"With the new police schooner, we ought to be able to get these men to Fort Fitzgerald in a few days and get the schooner back long before freeze-up, still in time for the fall fishing," I said.

"You're right, the only rub is, that you'll have to take the prisoners to Edmonton and that leaves the patrol boat without a skipper."

"Oh, no, sir. The Sergeant was sent here to learn this coast and the handling of business here. He's a former navy man, and it won't take him long to get the swing of things. Besides, you have the other man, and he can take me to Fitzgerald and bring the schooner back."

"That's settled. Get ready to set out at once."

"Yes sir," and I left the room to supervise the preparation of food and other supplies we would need, and to pack such personal effects as I would want. When I returned to the office, the Sergeant had received his orders from the Inspector and was already in charge of the patrol boat, and Baker, the constable, was given his instructions to go with me, choosing three Indians at Fort McPherson to act as a crew and one particular Indian to be pilot — an old employee of the police who knew all the rivers in the district.

"You men are in a bad fix," the Inspector was saying to the two gangsters as I entered the room, "and from the papers I received in the mail, saying that the Reverend Patterson and a student for the ministry were enroute North and asking me to do all in my power to assist them in getting settled, I can

only figure out that you either killed or beat up the two men, stole their papers and effects, and posed as them."

"We didn't kill them," said Red. He was pale, suddenly he seemed to realize the tight spot he and his partner were in.

"Of course that will have to be straightened out. When Bill turns you over to the police at Edmonton he will naturally report that, and in my estimation, you will do a wise thing to make a statement to me now so that when you get to Edmonton, you will not be charged with murder in addition to all the other charges against you."

"I'll write out a statement and sign it," said Red, and later he did.

That same day, the schooner sailed for Fort McPherson, where we picked up the Indians we needed to help take care of the work and pilot the boat up river to Fort Smith. Both prisoners seemed downhearted. They had been lucky in many ways, and had believed the luck would last forever, but the law had caught up with them as it always does, and they were in irons, headed for trial.

CHAPTER XII

THREE OUT OF FIVE

THE journey up river to Fort Smith was without any special incident, save for fighting off mosquitoes, which were unusually active that year, and more numerous. From Smith we crossed the portage to Fort Fitzgerald where we were surprised to meet the real Reverend Patterson and his friend and companion, Mr. Lawrence. Their story of being beaten up and robbed agreed in every detail with the story told by Red, but when we asked the Reverend gentleman to sign a complaint he refused. He was so elated to learn that his luggage was safe at Herschel Island and that he would be able to leave in a few days for his mission on the police schooner and not wait until the boat the following summer, he forgave the two gangsters and hurried across the portage to be sure not to miss the police boat when it left for down river again.

From Fort Fitzgerald to Vermillion Chutes on the gasoline towboat, and from there to Peace River Crossing on the steamer, we had no difficulty with the prisoners. Both Red and Gyp were greatly changed men and perhaps they realized what wasted lives their's had been. Red told me one day that with

all the thousands of dollars he and his partners had stolen during the past few years, he was actually money out. The cost of making getaways, paying high tribute to the underworld for protection when hiding from the police, their long flights from the police, cost so much they didn't actually realize a cent. Added to that the worry, the ever-haunting fear that the man they saw down the street might be a policeman looking for them, made their lives miserable to say the least.

When the steamer tied up at Peace River, there were two policemen there as usual, and what a sight it was for me! It was three years since I had been in civilization, and to once more see the uniform I so dearly loved and respected, was like meeting an old and very dear friend. "Scarlet Riders," I called from the deck of the steamer, and the policemen, at first not recognizing me, due to my Eskimo clothing, called, "Where do you hail from?" I called back "Herschel Island," and then they recognized me. "It's Bill, the old Walrus," they called. Two minutes later I was on the dock and soon we were out at the police detachment, where I heard for the first time the sad news of Sergeant Carter losing his prisoners.

The next day I took the train for Edmonton, still the guardian of Red and Gyp, and the following day delivered them to Inspector Brooks at "G" Division headquarters.

"Some experience, Bill," said the Inspector as I related my story.

"Inspector Brooks, I have had some tough patrols

in the North but I never experienced anything like the feeling I had when I thought those gangsters were going to deliberately steer the patrol boat to Banks Land."

"Well, you've done your work. What next?"

"I'd like a couple of weeks vacation. It's too late to get back to Herschel Island by boat this year. I can make my way north as far as Fort Fitzgerald before the freeze-up, then make the island on foot."

"I'll do better than that. Take your leave, and then we'll fly you as far as Fort Norman."

"That will be fine, sir."

And so I had my leave and later flew to Fort Norman and made the rest of the journey to the island by dog team after the freeze-up.

Blemmer and Butch had not been located when I left. They had disappeared as completely as if they had been swallowed up by the earth. From time to time rumors reached the police, and though every clue was followed, the men were not located. That the two desperate men were hiding, fearful of the police, now that they were without the usual protection from the rest of the gang, was evident.

Sergeant Carter had changed. Formerly light-hearted, though he took his work most seriously, he felt the loss of his prisoners keenly. Prisoners had escaped before, and perhaps more would in the future, but that was no consolation for Carter. He had not been censured by his superior officer, who had himself had a prisoner or two get away from him. Carter worked night and day on the case, but,

Rusty Blemmer and Butch were still among the missing.

The three others were tried and convicted, but their sentences were not pronounced at the time, further evidence that was wanted could only come from the trials of Butch and Blemmer when they were arrested and arraigned. There was no such thing as "if found," because the Scarlet Riders always get their man, and they would get the escaped criminals some day. It might take a long time to find them, it might mean a journey to the very ends of the earth, but they would be caught, sometime, somewhere. That was final.

* * *

"Listen, guys, I'm about done with this living, almost in a tree!" It was Butch who thus gave vent to his feelings. He and the chief, Rusty Blemmer, were hiding out in a forest near Lesser Slave Lake with two friends of Slater, the erstwhile member of the Blemmer gang who was serving a sentence in the penitentiary due to Blemmer. The two new men, Ace Auger and Joe De Mooch, had met up with Blemmer and Butch and intended to get revenge sooner or later, and now had them in their power by constantly threatening to kill them — slowly. Blemmer, whose treachery would never be forgotten by any person of the underworld, feared the two newcomers. He attempted on several occasions to get rid of them, tried to leave them and go

by himself, but to no avail. Never once could Butch and Rusty leave their hiding place together, but were always accompanied by one or the other of the men.

"I'd like to get out of here myself," said Blemmer.

"Oh, no you don't," spoke up Ace with a sneer on his lips and a nod of his head, "we have other plans for a couple of boys like you two. We will make your future plans."

"But we can't stay here much longer. We need clothes and food. What's the use of hiding here in the woods when we can get to one of the big cities and have some comforts?" asked Blemmer.

Joe rolled a log onto the fire and turned around with a laugh, "Say, where you're going you won't need comfort — nor clothes. We have our plans made. You remember Slater, don't you?"

"Sure," said Blemmer quietly, then added, "nice guy."

Both of the new men laughed openly. They were enjoying this sort of comedy and had enjoyed it for some time. It was so evident that they were getting on the nerves of Rusty and Butch. "Yeah," Ace said, "in fact he's such a 'nice guy' that the parole board of the State is going to send him out on a vacation. When that time comes he is coming up here to meet us. He sez that he has a little matter to settle up with you both. We just want to keep you in good condition till he arrives." Ace winked at Joe and again both let out a peal of laughter.

Blemmer gasped at this news. To meet Slater! It wouldn't be so easy as a bullet through the head, it would be torture, gang law would take charge of the trial and no punishment would be considered severe enough for having "squealed" on a former companion.

Day after day Blemmer and Butch were forced to do all the work, chop the wood, cook the food they had stolen, for they still had only the large bills that could not be used, their small bills were taken from them at Fort Vermillion. Ace and Joe had money, plenty of it, but they wouldn't spend one cent. Whenever anything was required, either Rusty or Butch was sent out to get it, and there was trouble in store if they returned empty handed. Blemmer knew that to his sorrow. He had been sent out one day to get tobacco and food for the camp. He had not been able to beg or steal any, and so returned to the camp empty handed. After supper that night, Ace and Joe took Rusty's shoes and socks from his feet, and beat the soles of his feet with birch twigs until he yelled with pain. That over, they tied his hands behind him and both men pounded him until he dropped. From then on, whatever orders were given, were obeyed to the letter.

"Go into town and ask for mail for Mister John Fletcher, Rusty, and be careful how you act and don't try to open the letter, understand? Scram!"

Rusty, his pride hurt, no longer chief of a gang, three of his men gone, maybe in jail, awaiting sentence, went into town, a five-mile walk. He was

given the errands to do that required a man with an education — whenever a job was to be done that could better be served by having a man who could talk intelligently, and not give his listeners any intimation he was other than a trapper who was looking about for a nice piece of land on which to homestead.

After the second time Blemmer had returned from an errand, he debated with himself a plan to flee — to get away from these men who were making life so miserable for him — but he soon changed his mind.

Butch was treated with more consideration than Blemmer. He was one of the kind who had the crude honor of the criminal. A pal was a pal. He could be trusted in all but one thing, he was ever too anxious to pull the trigger of his rifle, machine gun, or revolver, whichever was the handiest if there was someone with him. Otherwise, he too, was a coward.

Blemmer walked the several miles into town, the same as he had done times before. The postmaster knew him by this time, that is, as John Fletcher. There had never been any mail for Fletcher. Today as he entered the general store, in a corner of which was the post office, the postmaster smiled.

“Got that letter, Mister Fletcher. Here it is.”

“Thank you. Good-by.”

“Good-by,” replied the postmaster, and in another moment Blemmer was outside and on his weary walk back to camp.

There was something about that letter Blemmer didn't like. In the first place it was mailed in St. Paul, and Stillwater was also in Minnesota, and it was in the Minnesota State Penitentiary at Stillwater where Dingy Slater was incarcerated. If Slater once got out and came after Blemmer, he would be made a slave until such a time as Slater believed he had enough fun and then he would be put on the spot. He wanted to open the letter, but his fear for the penalties from Slater's friends if the letter was found to have been opened, kept him from doing it.

Once back in camp, which was beside a fine lake where there was good fishing, in a spot seldom visited by anyone except now and then an Indian in the winter, Blemmer found the other men in good humor. When the letter was opened and read by Ace, it was passed over to Joe and read. Neither spoke a word in the meantime, but as the letter had its second reading, the two men looked at each other and both broke out in a hearty laugh. It was not one of those laughs that lasts for a few minutes and then ends, it was one of those that is kept up minute after minute, and all evening long from time to time. Butch and Blemmer couldn't understand what it was all about but were amused at the other two.

"Say you guys," spoke up Butch, "why don't you let us in on the joke." At this the laughing was resumed.

After some minutes, the laughing ceased, and Ace said:

"So you want to know the joke, huh? Well, read this," and he tossed the letter to Blemmer.

"Say, this is code," said Blemmer after glancing through the letter.

"Course it is," said Joe, "but I'll tell you what the news is."

"Naw, let me tell 'em, Joe, it's my letter. Get ready for a big laugh, Rusty. This letter is from a pal of ours in St. Paul and he says that Slater crawled into a tank car that was being switched inside the 'pen' and made a break. He's free and heading for Canada to meet us!"

"Slater escaped!" cried out Blemmer, pale, shaking, panicky.

"Yeah, Rusty Blemmer, Slater's escaped. Isn't that great news?"

"Sure is," spoke up Joe, "I bet that makes you happy, Rusty, one of your old gang on the loose and heading straight for his chief." The gangster spoke insultingly, menacingly.

"Sure, that's all right," said Blemmer slowly. "That's all right, and I'll be glad to see him. When will he get here?"

"That depends on the Scarlet Riders, as they are called. You know how it is."

That night not a soul in camp slept. Butch and Blemmer feared facing Slater more than meeting the police. Captured by the police meant jail, trial, sentence to life imprisonment or execution. Capture by Slater and his friends meant torture. By this

time Rusty was fully aware that Ace and Joe were anxious to witness and take part in the avenging of Slater, and that the two men could have done this long ago, but true to the traditions of the underworld, left that job to the man who had been wronged.

Slater's friends remained awake. They had saved Rusty for their pal so far, they couldn't take any chances on losing him now that Slater was out of the penitentiary and on his way to do vengeance.

Throughout the long night Rusty Blemmer's mind traveled back to memories of years before. He knew where he had made his mistake in his youth that had landed him in the reformatory — the kindergarten of criminals. Now his one thought was to escape the fate that had finally caught up with him and was due to demand its penalty. His crafty mind, the mind of a coward and sneak, told him that he must do something, but the only way he knew was by the same means which had been his throughout a life of sin. He must steal some money and break away. Busily his mind worked at the problem and he finally struck upon a foul idea which meant taking a chance win or lose. He figured he had nothing to lose. "Let's see," he said to himself, "the general store in the village is a likely place." His sly smile showed that his plan was beginning to fashion. He knew just how he could throw suspicion on the men watching him. The problem of escape remained, but at last he had made up his mind. It meant a risk, but he was willing to take

it in order to free himself. Tomorrow morning, he thought, would be the time to put his plan into action. As soon as the men were astir, he would make his escape, get the money he needed and see to it that Ace and Joe paid the penalty of this, his last crime.

Somewhat at ease at the prospect of action, Blemmer rolled over for a few hours of sleep which he knew would be needed.

CHAPTER XIII

CARTER SEES AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE

THE four men in their camp in the forest had finished their dinner — a late one — about three o'clock in the afternoon. There was little merriment that morning and early afternoon. Ace and Joe had to arrange to meet Slater and they were not certain when he would reach the village. There was no way of letting him know where he should come to, and even if they could, it would be next to impossible to give directions that could be followed — the retreat was so well hidden and away from roads that one simply had to find the place by himself.

"I hate to go into town, but beginning tonight, we'll take turns going in after dark," said Ace to Joe.

"Yeah, an' don't forget what Dingy said about making a mark on the water tank or depot."

"How about some fish, fellows?" This from Blemmer.

"Aw, I don't want to do no fishin'," said Ace.

"Me neither," said Joe.

"I'd like some," spoke up Butch.

"I'll do the fishing if you care to eat the catch, but I don't like fishing well enough for the sake of holding a line in my hand a couple of hours."

"Okay, Rusty, see if you can get enough fish for supper," said Ace, "but remember this, don't row that boat more'n a hundred feet from shore and come in when we call or you're a goner."

"Can I go with 'im?" asked Butch.

"No, I'd rather go alone," said Blemmer, "you talk too much when you're fishing, you scare all the fish away."

"Git started Rusty, an' 'member what I said."

"Okay," replied Blemmer as he started to prepare the fishing tackle.

When Blemmer shoved the canoe from the shore, he had plenty of bait and a piece of hemp rope for the purpose of stringing any fish he might catch. He had prepared for his fishing deliberately, and with thoroughness. He intended not to come back to the camp, but in order to throw the other men off their guard, he must act very natural to make it appear as if he were taking his work seriously.

He kept near the shore for some time, then started to move slowly away. He went toward the middle of the stream, and back again, never once causing any suspicion by his actions. Finally, he started along the shore of the lake near the camp, but slowly shoving the boat further and further north. There was a long piece of land jutting out in the lake a few rods away, and that was where Rusty intended to make his dash for liberty. He caught a few small fish, and then when beyond the boundary set by his captors, held up his fish and called:

"Look, are these enough?"

"Enough for you, but not for all of us. Get a couple more big ones," Ace shouted back.

Rusty again pushed the boat northward, and finally its nose touched the sandy beach of the point. He got out of the boat and set it adrift, ran up the bank and was out of sight before the astonished gangsters realized what he was doing. They fired a couple of rifle shots in his direction, then ran along the shore, keeping Butch ahead of them, toward the point. When they got there, Rusty was not to be seen.

"A swell guy you are, Ace," said Joe, "lettin' that yellow dog get away!"

"Isn't my fault any more'n yours," spoke up Ace, and for an hour one tried to throw the blame on the other. They didn't dare go into the village before dark; they were afraid of the police as much as Blemmer. As to what Slater would say when he arrived and there was no Blemmer — well, they would trace him. They'd wait until after dark, then go to the village and search for him. They'd get Blemmer if they had to spend the rest of their lives looking for him.

It was a long time before dark, and Blemmer who had been in the village on errands so often that he was acquainted a little, especially at the general store, could move about a little and get information as to trains and other matters without causing suspicion. Not so the others, their pictures and descriptions were on the board of every government building in Canada, the same as Rusty's, but Rusty's

picture wasn't anything like he looked, and descriptions can be much alike. There are ten thousand men who will answer any general description.

Rusty Blemmer ran through the woods as far as the narrow dirt road that led to the village, then walked. He knew that he would not be followed during the daylight. His problem was keeping out of harm's way at night, when under cover of darkness his former keepers could venture out of the forest and into the village without being seen.

Upon arrival at the village, Blemmer walked to the depot.

"I'm expecting some freight. When does the next freight train stop here coming from Peace River?" This question was addressed to the telegraph operator on duty.

"What's the name?"

"Douglas, Alex Douglas," said Blemmer. He expected nothing but wanted to know about the trains.

"Nothing here as yet. The next freight train that stops here is the way freight tomorrow morning."

"Why I thought there was a night train."

"There is, but it doesn't stop here. Stops at McLennan to change engines, but that's all except for coal and water until it gets to Edmonton."

"That's too bad, that must be the train I expected my freight on. Goes through here about nine thirty?"

"No, about ten forty-five."

"That must be it. I thought it was earlier."

"It should be earlier, but the trains are so long

and heavy these days that they can scarcely get up the hill and lose a lot of time. Why, almost any night a schoolboy could hop the freight going through, but when it gets past the depot on level track, hot dog, does that train reel 'em off!"

Blemmer thanked the man and departed from the depot with a smile on his face. He would walk north a way toward a woods along the track, and he laughed even though every step he took in that direction took him nearer and nearer to the Peace River police detachment where he might have spent some time had he not been so resourceful as to plan and carry out his scheme to knock out Carter.

Money now was his one need. He must have money. The store would close about nine o'clock. The entire village would be asleep shortly after that. He would have plenty of time to get the money he needed, money in small bills that he could safely spend, from the store's cash drawer and safe. It would be child's play to get every cent in that old iron box behind the post-office partition.

Blemmer walked down the track to the edge of the woods, and then sat down and rested. He was tired from his long walk, not all walking either; he had run quite a distance. Then he drew from his pocket an envelope that had once been intended to hold a letter for Slater's friends in St. Paul, but which was not used but thrown away because it had been torn. Rusty had picked it up for some reason or other. On this Blemmer drew a map of the camp, the lake and other directions; that would do the

trick at the store when the time came. He was proud of the drawing. He could find the place himself with the map, he thought, even if he had never been there.

Time dragged. He was thirsty, and walked to a little stream and drank his fill. He was also hungry — but there was no way to remedy that — so he waited, smiling often as he thought of what that night would mean to him, and what the morning would mean when the envelope with the map drawn on it would be found beside the robbed safe.



The evening dusk had drawn into darkness. Blemmer walked toward the village and could see but two lights, and they were on the other side of the town's only street, the opposite end from the general store. Keeping close to the buildings as he walked, he came to the general store. There was no light inside, and Blemmer knew the lock was one that he could easily open with a piece of wire he had picked up days before out of habit — pieces of wire have been the means of acquiring wealth by gangsters of meaner power than the mighty Blemmer gang, and Blemmer had learned how to use that wire when but a youngster and the leader of his first gang. There was no one on the street, and it was so quiet that if anyone would start down the wooden walk, he could detect the sound three blocks away.

The store door was soon opened — a matter of

a few seconds, and Blemmer stepped inside. He had been in the store enough times to know the lay of it well — in fact, but one visit to any store or bank and he could draw a plan of it as accurate as an architect, even if not so well done.

First he opened the cash box. In the darkness he couldn't tell how much money he had, but there were a few bills and some silver. Then he walked behind the post-office partition and in almost less time than it takes to tell it, with a handkerchief wrapped around his hand, had opened the old-fashioned safe with a key instead of a combination, and was rummaging through the contents. He felt bills and silver. Then dropping the drawing he had made on the back of the envelope on the floor in front of the safe, he pocketed his new-found wealth, walked to the store door, opened it, listened a moment and then stepped outside, locking the door behind him with the wire. Then Rusty Blemmer walked down the track to await the arrival of the fast freight for Edmonton.

It was dark that night, just such a night as Blemmer needed for his plans. He was not far from the edge of the village, and as he waited he thought he heard footsteps on the boardwalk — he did hear footsteps. But he couldn't see a thing. An hour later he heard the whistle in the distance, then he saw the headlight. The train seemed to be making good speed and Blemmer was disheartened — but it was merely making a run for the hill, soon the train slowed down until it barely moved — the headlight

gleamed on the rails, and when the train was opposite him, Blemmer made a run for the side of a car, caught the rungs of the ladder in his hand, swung himself from the ground and in a moment was riding the bumpers between two boxcars. Soon he had passed the depot, but he was looking the other way — wanted to see if there was anyone in the village — two old oil lamps at the end of the street revealed no one. Soon the train commenced to gather speed — then the moon came out from behind a cloud — but Blemmer was happy, he was freed of his enemies, he had money, spendable money, in his pocket — he was on his way to freedom!



Sergeant Carter was tired. He had been riding since early morning, searching along the shores of Lesser Slave Lake for the escaped criminals but without success. The police had thoroughly covered the territory north and south of the lake, yet it seemed impossible the men he sought could be anywhere else than around that famous little body of water. He had mapped his work well, and was confident that with the help he had from the Peace River detachment he would be able to locate the men unless by some bit of luck (and the Blemmer gang seemed to have that aplenty) he would come upon the men or at least some clue that would lead him to the men who had caused him much worry

and chagrin. He was not far from the village of Nampa where he intended spending the night, to be rested for an early start in the morning, on another day of searching. His horse was tired, and Carter talked to it as they jogged along. Carter heard a train whistle, then saw the headlight — and just as he came to the crossing over the tracks, the engine passed. He would have to wait until the train cleared the crossing before he could continue on into town. Oh, how good a rest would feel, even if he had to sleep in the woods, but that would be all right, he would have a soft bed as he was traveling with full equipment while he combed the area and had his blanket, poncho, and other necessities.

The train pulled up the hill slowly at first, and then as the top was reached, gained a little speed. Carter watched the cars as they passed slowly in front of him — he was not watching for anything in particular, but he couldn't help keeping his eyes on the train — and then, just as about eight cars had passed him he saw something that made him straighten up — between two boxcars he saw the figure of a man — a figure he couldn't forget, the round shoulders slightly stooped, and the big soft hat, yes, he knew that figure well, he had seen it several days at a stretch not so long ago, and he had seen that figure night after night in his dreams.

"Come on, Dan, come on, boy, get going," and Carter urged his horse to top speed alongside the moving train. "Come Dan old pal, faster, faster," and Carter did something he seldom had done in his

life, he spurred the beautiful beast. The horse, sensing something important, forgot his tired legs, and sped along the right of way beside the train which was moving ever faster and faster.

"Now boy, once more," and Carter reined the beast close to the train — close enough to grasp the iron rungs of the ladder on a boxcar — he swung clear of the horse, and climbed the ladder to the top — Dan, almost human in his understanding, came to a halt as soon as he could, and then slowly turned and walked back to the crossing. The next morning the riderless horse was found outside the police detachment at Peace River. He had traveled the many weary miles back alone.

The train by this time was making speed — the cars swayed from side to side as the train gained momentum going down hill. It was hard work walking on top of the train especially when crossing from one car to another. But car by car Carter walked toward where he had seen the figure of the man he had searched for so long. Finally, Carter looked down between two cars and saw the man he sought standing with one foot on the bumper of the head car, the other on the car following, and was holding on to bars on the car ends with both hands. He was facing the west, so Carter crossed over to the forward car, took a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, saw that they were open and ready for service, placed one on his left hand, and let the rest of it dangle. He then went down the ladder, stepped between the cars — and snapped the handcuff on

Rusty before the gangster was aware of his presence. There was too much noise to say anything, but holding tightly onto an iron crossbar with his free hand, Carter reached down with one foot and started to turn the angle cock on the air line to stop the train. Blemmer grasped a hold on the rear car with his right hand, the one that was shackled, and started to pound Carter with the other. The policeman could do nothing but take the beating. Finally the angle cock had been closed sufficiently to cause the brakes to set, and soon the brake shoes were grinding against the car wheels.

As the train slowed down, Carter waited for a chance to jump. He knew there was a bridge not far away, and he didn't want to cross that long trestle with a prisoner shackled to him. But Blemmer settled the matter for him, he made a lunge, expecting to throw himself free from the train but throw Carter under the wheels, but both men fell clear of the tracks.

Over and over the two men rolled down the embankment from the railroad bed to the level ground, thirty feet below — stones, brushes, fallen trees in their path were hit by the men. At the bottom, they hit a large stone, but Carter was underneath, and got the full force of the fall against it as well as the weight of Blemmer, then both men lay still.

The train crew heard the noise of the men, when they were crashing through the brush, but paid no attention to it. They surmised a tramp wanted

to get off there and had turned the angle cock to make the train come to a stop. They growled a little about it, that was all. The train was soon under way again.

Both men lay still for a long time. Then Blemmer came to his full senses. He pulled and tugged at the handcuffs but couldn't open them. He went through the pockets of the policeman lying death-like beside him. But aside from a notebook and pencil and some money, there was nothing in his pockets. He looked for the revolver, but the holster was empty and the revolver torn from its lanyard. Knowing the policeman always carried keys for shackles, Blemmer surmised the keys had fallen from Carter's pockets during the roll down the bank. He determined to find those keys and the revolver so he could shoot the lock apart and free himself, but he couldn't hunt for them without dragging Carter along with him, and he couldn't do that, he found out after several trials the policeman was too heavy, and so he fell to beating the insensible man, first with his bare fists, and then with a stone he found near by.

Of all the nights Blemmer had spent he never spent one like that one. He believed Carter was dying — but he could not get away from him, he was chained to his archenemy, the man who had sworn to get him and from whom he had twice before escaped. Until daylight, Blemmer alternated between beating the silent form beside him, and tugging at the shackles, pulling, twisting, trying to

free himself before someone might come through the brush and see him.

Blemmer was hungry, he hadn't eaten for many hours, not since before he started on his fishing trip — he was thirsty, he had not had a drink since before he had robbed the store — and he had money, money he could spend, not those big bills he was afraid to try to use, but small bills. As the sun came up Blemmer counted his money — he had close to five hundred dollars — enough to get him where he wanted to go — to the Pacific Coast, and get a steamer to South America or any place, but he couldn't move, he was chained to a policeman. The sun came up and Carter still lay quiet. Blemmer by now was frantic. He started to pound the face of the policeman with the stone again. After a long time he heard a noise — at first he could not make out what it was, and then, as it came closer, he knew it was a handcar he heard. He stretched himself beside Carter to avoid being seen when the men would pass the spot — somehow during the day he would get free.

"Hey, McCarthy, what's that over there?" shouted one of the section men on the handcar to the foreman.

"Where, Pat?"

"Over there in the brushes. Something that's bright red."

"Hold 'er, boys, we'll find out what that is."

The car stopped, and the men took it from the tracks, and started down the bank. On the way, one

man found a small bunch of keys, another a R. C. M. P. revolver, and a few feet further on came upon the insensible policeman in his scarlet tunic shackled to a frightened man.

“Hey, you, what’s all this?” asked the foreman.

There was no answer.

“Lord, look at that policeman’s face, it’s like a piece of chewed-up dog meat.”

“Say, Pat, look at that stone there beside the civilian, it’s all covered with blood.”

“Aha, bejabers an’ yez have been bustin’ that lad with a stone while he’s out huh? Say, we know what to do with the likes o’ you. Flanagan, hustle up on the track and flag number nine, we’ll get these men to Peace River hospital. My, my, what a looking face. Poor fellow.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE MYSTERY MAN

WHEN number nine stopped at Nampa on its way to Peace River, two passengers alighted, one on the depot platform, one on the other side of the train. The conductor went into the depot and instructed the operator to telephone the Mounted Police detachment at Peace River that he had a police Sergeant chained to a prisoner aboard. The policeman was badly battered up and should be taken to the hospital on arrival of the train.

"What's all the crowd around the store for?" asked the conductor.

"Big robbery last night," replied the operator, "but we've sent for the Mounties and those Scarlet Riders will soon get the robbers."

A moment later the train pulled out and when Peace River was reached, an ambulance was at the depot with two Scarlet Riders. Prisoner and policeman were taken to the hospital. At the hospital, Carter was hurried to a private room, then to the operating table. The prisoner was placed in a room, and two policemen stood guard over him.

Two hours later a plane arrived with Inspector Brooks and Corporal Hughes from Edmonton. They

went to Carter's room. By that time the brave policeman had had his wounds dressed and the broken bones set.

"I've sent to Regina for one of our own nurses, doctor," said the Inspector, "Carter will feel better with her in charge. Just how badly is he hurt?"

"From what we can tell now, he will be about in a month, but if there have been internal injuries, there's no telling what the results will be."

"May I see him?"

"Yes, but don't stay long. Nurse Walbridge, show the Inspector to the Sergeant's room."

The Inspector saw a sorry-looking man. Carter's head was swathed in bandages, only his lips showing. His right arm and hand were in splints, his left ankle in a cast. The nurse informed the Inspector that Carter's body was bruised badly — was in fact a mass of bruises, and that he must have received most brutal treatment from the prisoner found shackled to him.

"Feel like talking, Sergeant?" from Brooks.

"Oh, Inspector! Where am I and where is my prisoner?" he spoke haltingly and weakly.

"You're in the hospital, and Blemmer is in the adjoining room under guard. I am taking him to Edmonton this afternoon."

"Well, I got my man anyway."

"That you did, Carter. Did you hear anything about the robbery at Nampa last night?"

"Didn't hear a thing." Carter spoke slowly. His

head and face were so thickly bandaged, and his lips, the only part of his face that could be seen, were cut. Talking was difficult.

While the conversation was going on, a second plane landed at the airport. A tall, rather good-looking woman accompanied by a Mounted Policeman alighted. The policeman carried a small traveling bag. They walked rapidly to an awaiting motor car, got in and were whisked to the hospital.

"Good morning. May I see the superintendent? I am Nurse Allen from the Mounted Police hospital at Regina."

"Step into the office, please, nurse. The doctor is in there."

"Good morning, doctor. I am Nurse Allen from Regina."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Nurse Allen. I have heard a lot about you. I have instructions from your Chief Surgeon, Doctor Wylie, to turn our patient, Sergeant Carter, over to you. Aside from rendering you every service possible, you will have entire charge of Sergeant Carter."

"Thank you, doctor. May I have the particulars, please?"

"The Sergeant was brought in this morning. He was picked up south of Nampa, chained to a prisoner. He was unconscious when we received him. Two policemen who met the train at the depot unlocked the handcuffs. His prisoner was badly bruised about the body, and is now under guard

in a private room. He will be taken to Edmonton by Inspector Brooks this afternoon. I am giving you all the details."

"Thank you, doctor."

"We rushed the Sergeant to the operating room. You may read our report."

"Hum-m-m," said Nurse Allen after she had read the report. "Not so bad for Carter."

"What do you mean, nurse?"

"The first time I had Bill Carter for a patient, we were three days probing for lead. His body was badly punctured. The next time was when he was shot through in trying to save the life of the Prince; the last time I flew to Herschel Island to nurse a young policeman named Fay and Carter. That time Carter was badly frostbitten and we had a hard time saving his hands, feet, ears, and nose. He was physically exhausted and had nothing to eat for days. He pulled through all right."

"Sort of an iron man?"

"No, just like the rest of the Mounted Policemen. Clean inside and out, clean of body and of brain. That's half the battle, don't you think, doctor?"

"I agree thoroughly."

"And now all he has is a sprained foot, two broken fingers, a broken forearm, and a bruised face."

"The face is quite serious, it is badly cut. The eyes are swollen shut and we have been unable to examine them as yet."

"We'll have to keep those fingers straight, Car-

ter shoots with both hands. Walks a lot, always alone when he can do so, like a lone wolf. Can't let him have a lame ankle. And as for the face, Carter, like myself, isn't handsome. He's a manly looking chap, but he needs every bit of the few good looks he has. We'll pay special attention to his face."

"I am certain you can fix him up, Nurse Allen."

"Perhaps! I have never lost a Scarlet Rider patient yet, and none of them have been anything but fit for duty when discharged from the hospital. Where is Sergeant Carter's room, please?"

"At the head of the stairs, Room 24."

"Thank you. I would like a cot placed in the room. I will be on duty twenty-four hours a day."

"We can give you a night nurse."

"I prefer to handle the case alone, doctor."

Inspector Brooks heard a rap on the door — a light rap. He opened the door and he smiled as he saw Nurse Allen. She was dressed in the stiff, white uniform typical of her profession — she was not pretty, but she had a wonderful personality — her hands were rather large — it was said she could handle a two-hundred-pound man like a girl would a doll.

"Come in." He turned to where Carter lay on the bed, "An old friend of yours to see you Carter."

"Who is it?"

"Guess, Sergeant," said Nurse Allen cheerily.

"Nurse Allen," said the surprised and pleased Carter.

"In the flesh," said the nurse, "and I'm here by

orders of none other than the Commissioner himself."

"That's fine," replied Carter who was really very fond of the capable woman. "Now I can find out just what's wrong with me."

"Don't you know already?"

"Only that I have a bad ankle and arm and there's something wrong with my head and face."

"We'll know all about that soon." The nurse gave a low, hearty laugh. "Sergeant, do you remember when you returned from Montreal and told me about visiting the museum and seeing a mummy there?"

"Yes, some old king of Egypt."

"Well, you look just like that mummy, the way you described it to me." For a few minutes patient and nurse bantered, the latter doing the most of the talking, as it was so difficult for Carter to speak, but the experienced nurse wanted to get the policeman's mind off himself. Then she started to take the dressing off Carter's head and face. There were many yards of dressing covering the bruised head, and it took some minutes to do the task; at last the face and head were bared. Inspector Brooks gave one look, turned toward the window with tears in his eyes. Nurse Allen clenched her fists, stiffened for a moment, then quietly and quickly bathed the battered face and closed eyes with a solution there for that purpose and bandaged the head again. She was very quiet all the time. Her mind went back to other days when the manly

chap had smiled at her, his big eyes beaming — and now so bruised was he that he couldn't open his eyes and the face was so battered, no one would recognize him.

"Well, Sergeant, if you're a good boy we'll have you out of here in four weeks."

"You must tell me what I want to know," said Carter quietly.

"I will. I will tell you the truth. It is going to be a hard job to get you in shape again, but if you will trust me, work with me, and do your part, I promise you will have very few scars."

"Thanks, nurse."

"I suppose you two burly policemen still have some things to talk about. I'll return in a few minutes," and the nurse started for the door, then turned and held up three fingers, and the Inspector knew his talk was to be limited to that many minutes.

"It's lucky for you that you lost your keys and revolver, old chap."

"I didn't lose them, Inspector. When we rolled over and over and I hit the first big rock, I knew the chances were I would be knocked out, so I got my hand in my pocket and dropped the keys, then I tore the revolver from the lanyard. I had lost my prisoner once before and I didn't intend to lose him again."

When the nurse left the room, she stood for a moment against the wall of the hall. She had always liked Carter, he was game, ever willing to do a

favor and never complained even when he was imposed upon, or when suffering intense pain. The sight of the man's face seemed to haunt her. She looked up the doctor to make her report.

"And what do you think of your patient, nurse?"

"I can tell better tomorrow. But I have never seen such a face in my life. I almost lost control of myself."

"Nurse Allen, if you can save that face from being permanently so scarred it will be repulsive to even his friends, you will have accomplished a wonder. The nose is entirely out of shape, and the one ear that was torn, the right one we sewed, what about them?"

"Doctor, I have been a nurse for seventeen years. I have had some hard cases in that time. If I do not do what I want to do this time, I am through with nursing."

"Why do you say that?"

"If a man, simply in the line of duty as he sees it, must go through life maimed and so scarred no one wants to look at him, then I consider my life and experience wasted. I rely on more than mere skill to accomplish results, doctor."

"And what is that?"

"There is One who is a far greater surgeon than all the surgeons in the world combined." Then in a happier mood, "Don't forget, please, to have the cot moved into the room and I also will have my meals there." And Nurse Allen walked from the room with a determination she would accomplish,

what she understood from the manner of the surgeon, was considered impossible.

Back in Carter's room, Nurse Allen lifted a warning finger to the Inspector, who concluded his talk and soon took his departure, with the promise he would be back soon, but not before Carter said:

"Remember, Inspector, he is my prisoner. Rather than Blemmer escape again, I would have you handcuff him to me and take him to Edmonton myself."

The wily Blemmer signed a statement before he left the hospital, setting forth that he had robbed the general store at Nampa. The evidence was against him, for before the Inspector had left the hospital he received a relayed telephone call from Nampa saying that while it was evident the robber had used a handkerchief to prevent leaving fingerprints, that the man must have been on his knees when working on the safe and had used his left hand to assist him in getting on his feet, by placing it on top of the safe and raising himself in that manner. The left hand was not protected in any way, and the fingerprint test compared absolutely with those on file of Oscar Winbrooke, alias Rusty Blemmer. The drawing found on the floor was not being disregarded, and a search near the lake would be made at once, and all considered the leaving of the map as a deliberate means of avenging some wrong. That this was more than possible, was shown by the fact that Blemmer before had exposed a fellow member of his own gang.

For once in a long time, there were plenty of

policemen on duty at Peace River detachment, because of the extra men from Regina who came with Nurse Allen and from Edmonton. Sergeant Ian Parker and Corporal Hughes had arrived. To them, being extras at the detachment, fell the job of running down the criminals known to be somewhere in the vicinity of Nampa and Lesser Slave Lake.

In investigating the robbery, Sergeant Parker learned that a stranger had been seen in town shortly after train number nine bearing the wounded Carter had pulled out of town. While at the time he could not be connected with the crime or with the criminals being sought, nothing could be overlooked that might help to solve the matters and bring the guilty parties to justice.

"Corporal," said Parker to Hughes, "have the men search every bit of the woods around the lake on the north and east sides. I have ordered men to patrol the south end of the lake and the woods there, and the west side is well taken care of. If there are men in hiding around the lake, we'll get them within twenty-four hours."

"All right, Sergeant, and then what?"

"That's enough for the time being. I want to locate this stranger we've heard about. He's dressed like a trapper, has a roll of blankets and a pack. Nothing suspicious about him, but I want to find out why this man didn't get off the train on the depot side, but got off on the other side of the train."

"How did you get that information?"

"A homesteader coming into town didn't have

time to cross the railroad tracks ahead of the train. He said he saw the man get off, look around in all directions, and then make for the heavy timber down the track."

"May be not of any interest in the present case, but it would be nice to meet the gentleman anyway, eh, Sergeant?"

"Correct. Get the men spread out as I directed. I'll join you in a few hours. Remember, we are positive the men we are looking for are around the lake somewhere."

Hughes carried out the Sergeant's instructions. Within an hour he and three men were searching the woods on the shore of the lake. From time to time he could hear the men searching on the west side of the lake, otherwise all was quiet.

It was growing dusk before a halt was ordered, and then a camp was made and supper prepared. While this was going on, Sergeant Parker appeared on the scene and expressed some disappointment that there had been no results.

"As soon as I have a bite to eat I am going to ride around the lake as far as the horse can carry me. He hasn't had any exercise to speak of today and I can ride late. I want to get in touch with all the men."

The supper over, a guard was posted and the tired men and horses had their well-earned rest. Sleeping in the open, without a tent was not new to the little band, and being healthy they enjoyed it. Just at day-break, Hughes arose, cut a long slender branch from

a tree and fashioned a fishpole out of it. From his saddle bags he drew forth a fishline and hooks. It didn't take long to get bait, and the young Corporal set out to get enough fish to surprise the policemen at breakfast.

Treading his way through the woods, Hughes drew near to the shore of the lake, and looking about for a place that appeared a likely one for a comfortable resting place while waiting for a bite, his eyes wandered around the end of the lake and saw, on the east side a few rods from where he stood, a man packing a canvas bag, another man rolling blankets, and two other men engaged in looking about apparently trying to destroy any evidence that might be left behind when they broke camp — for that is what the men seemed to be engaged in. Hughes forgot his fishing and kept his eyes on the men. That they were in haste was a sure thing, so Hughes ran back to the camp of his men, ordered them to prepare to ride at once, as far as they could among the trees, then dismount and proceed on foot in the direction of the place where he had seen the men. Promptness is one thing the policemen know, and in almost less time than it takes to tell about it, the men were riding among the trees along the east side of the lake.

When the brush and trees became too thick for the horses, the men dismounted, tied their horses to trees and proceeded on foot. It was but a short time before they came upon the camp they sought — a large bowl formed by rocks that hid the camp from

the actual view, one which would not have been easily found, had it not been for the fact Hughes had seen the men on the shore.

"Stay here. I'm going on top of the rocks and have a look around," said Hughes, and two minutes later he was gazing at the camp, but instead of the four men he had seen before, now there were but three. One he recognized at once, Butch of the broken Blemmer gang.

He was about to get down from his observation point, when a shot rang out, and another. One tore through the policeman's hat, the other struck the ground a foot from him. Hughes made haste to rejoin his companions.

"Those shots were fired from the other side of the camp. We must spread out and force those men into the open."

"The only open place is the lake, Corporal."

"We must get them out of that retreat of theirs, no matter where they go, that place is like a fortress. Spread out, and don't be afraid to shoot. If they get away from here, they can only go to the north end of the lake, in any other direction, they are as good as arrested. Step lively."

CHAPTER XV

THE DUEL IN THE FOREST

COME out of hiding, in the name of the law," called out Hughes when his men were spread out around the stones forming the camp.

There was no reply, nor had it been expected. He felt sure the men would feel so safe that they would not pay any attention to anything the police said.

Hughes started to climb a tree. A shot in his direction from near by stopped him, although the shot went wild. It would be foolish to take such a risk. Then he thought of another plan. He walked along the rocks toward the lake. His plan was to get inside the bowl and draw fire from the men, while he would be at a point of vantage and not likely to be hit by bullets. He reached the edge of the lake — he stepped toward the camp, that is, around the end of the rock formation, his revolver in hand, and there directly in front of him, but with their backs toward him, were three men.

"Stick 'em up boys. Lively," called the policeman.

"Yeah?" shouted one man, who wheeled, his arm raised as if to shoot, but a bullet from Hughes' revolver made him drop the gun and he gave a yell

at the pain in his hand. The other two men kept their hands raised.

"Drop those revolvers. And keep your hands up."

The men obeyed. But Hughes was worried. Where was the other man, and what would he do?

"Now come this way men and don't try anything. I'll not shoot as long as you do as I say."

The men walked toward Hughes, and he marched them ahead of him to the side of the rocks where the policemen were. Shackling the men together Hughes instructed all of his men but one to take them to where they had camped the night before. He and the other man then started through the woods looking for the fourth man.

The man was not to be found. The policemen searched until noon, and then returned to where they had left their horses and rode back to their camp. Later they returned and carried back all the camping equipment and supplies Butch and his partners had left behind.

"Butch, I suppose you'd like to know what's happened to your old chief." Hughes was talking, a few hours later.

"Who you mean?" asked Butch surlily.

"Rusty Blemmer."

"Never heard of him."

"All right, old top, but just the same you are going to stand trial with him on some of the charges we have against you. Come on, boys, back to town. We have just enough time to get these men there for the Edmonton train. Better step on it, though."

They arrived in town with but a few minutes to spare. Three men were detailed to take the prisoners to Edmonton, the other to watch the vicinity of the railroad until midnight, and then return to Peace River. Hughes rode back to where they had camped the night before, with a firm determination he would capture the man he was after, and believing he could work better alone, that there would be less noise and therefore less opportunity of being heard. In a deserted loghouse not far from the camp, he tied his horse after he had been watered, and set out on foot, armed with his rifle and two revolvers and as much ammunition as he could conveniently carry.

The reason for returning to the old camping place was that it was from there he could measure distances. He recalled quite well in what direction he walked when he set out on his fishing trip, and later to the criminals' camp. He wanted to retrace his steps because he felt quite sure if the missing man was still in the woods, he would be somewhere in the vicinity of where he was first seen, that is, in their camp which was so well protected by the rocks.

Hughes was a good woodsman — he could glide almost noiselessly through the brush, and in a country where it is usually so quiet that a small sound travels a long way, that is an asset. Bit by bit the Corporal lessened the distance between the edge of the woods and the camp — he finally drew so close to it that he could see distinctly the huge stones that walled the camp. He looked about him, but not a thing could he see that interested him. And then

from a distance he heard shots being fired — he tried to count them, but they came too fast, and then after two or three minutes all was still. Those shots were fired quite a ways to the south — if a man tried to go in that direction, he would be stopped by the police patrolling there — and now they would slowly close in by coming northward. If anyone tried to get out of the dense woods and were stopped, he would try the east perhaps, and would see there was a patrol there also, so he would come north — toward where Hughes was. So the policeman quietly, but quite impatiently, sat on the ground and waited. He waited a long time before he heard anything, and then he heard someone coming through the dense brush not very far away. He arose to his feet and waited in readiness. The sound drew closer, ever closer, until it seemed as if the man must be a few feet away. Then from behind a tree, hidden from view, Hughes prepared to pounce upon the man as soon as he drew close enough — he even had his handcuffs ready, all he would have to do would be to snap them on the wrist of his prisoner. After what seemed ages, the man came close enough, and Hughes stepped from his hiding place, his revolver in hand, and he saw a strange man. “Halt,” said Hughes and the man turned his head, but instead of stopping, he started to run, the Corporal after him, running through trees where there was practically no brush. They were running at top speed, and Hughes was gaining, he was within a yard — when the man grasped a small tree, and before the

Corporal could stop, the man had swung completely around the tree with his hands, and planted both feet on the policeman's back, knocking him down. Before he was on his feet, the man was a considerable distance away — Hughes could see him between the trees and he fired — the man kept going. A second shot, without effect, but when the third shot fired, the man stopped, went behind a tree and started to return the fire.

Shot after shot was exchanged, and the policeman was ever running from one tree to another, always getting closer to the man who did not leave the tree where he first stopped. Soon the adversaries were but a few feet apart. It was now a real duel between the two men — a duel in earnest and the only thing to shoot at, was the revolver hand of the enemy as it appeared beside the trunk of the tree.

Hughes had the advantage because he could shoot with either hand, and had two revolvers, while his foe had but one. When the policeman stopped to reload, he reloaded two revolvers at once and of course did not have to cease firing so often, and he still had his rifle slung over his shoulder. He finally determined the rifle was what he needed, he slipped it from his shoulder, and taking careful aim fired, but not quickly enough, for the enemy's hand was withdrawn from view in the nick of time, and before he could reload, the man fled to another tree, but Hughes saw where he went, and again taking aim, was just about to fire when a bullet struck his hand — and he was out of the duel. After bandag-

ing the hand with his handkerchief, he was again ready for the fray, but the man was gone. He disappeared completely. That night Sergeant Parker met Hughes and sent him to the Peace River hospital, and took up the search himself. A search that gave no results. The man disappeared as completely as if he had been swallowed up by the trees.

Three days later the search of the woods was completed, without securing a single clue, and the men returned to their respective stations.

Time passed quickly for many of the men, those on details and patrols, but to one man, time dragged — the wounded Sergeant in the Peace River hospital. Days dragged into weeks and the weeks into two months before the doctors and Nurse Allen permitted him to be discharged and during all that time he fretted over his inactivity.

Nurse Allen's work showed excellent results. The eyesight was saved and but a few small scars marred his face.

As soon as Carter reported for duty at Edmonton, he was transferred to Regina and made an instructor of recruits. At first he enjoyed the work — riding, shooting, teaching law, and the like, but as rumors of various assignments of his brother policemen reached him, he became restless. He no longer smiled as he worked. Perhaps the one thing that bothered him the most was the fact that Slater had not been located. Some thought the escaped convict had returned to the States, because none of the few crimes committed could be traced to him, and

as he was by no means a small-time racketeer, it was expected that if he were still in Canada, sooner or later, most likely sooner, a crime of more than the usual magnitude would be committed.

One day Adjutant Rich sent for Carter.

"Sergeant, when you first reported here, you seemed to be one of the most contented men on the Force, but now you go about your work with a long face and never a smile. What's the matter?"

"Nothing, sir, except that I miss assignments and patrols."

"We thought we were doing you a favor when we transferred you here for instruction duty, but it seems we made a mistake."

"Adjutant, I love this uniform and every man who wears it, and those who ever did wear it, and I am too well versed in the policies of the Force to question any duty assigned me."

"That's rather evading the question, Carter. Do you wish to continue as an instructor, or would you prefer to be assigned to other duty?"

"If it can be conveniently arranged, I would prefer to be assigned to other duties sir."

"How about Banff?"

"I'd prefer some other places, sir."

"Don't like parading for the tourists, I suppose. Well, here's what I'll do. I'll send you to New York with the group who are to participate in the horse show, following that I will assign you to a detachment or perhaps to 'G' Division headquarters for work that will be more in keeping with a man of your capabilities and experience. Does that suit you?"

"Yes sir."

"As soon as I can find someone to relieve you of your duties here, I'll make the change."

"Thank you, sir," and Carter smiled for the first time in a long while.

But Carter didn't go to the New York Horse Show after all. One day in January the Inspector sent for him.

"Ever been in the Hudson Bay country, Sergeant?"

"Only as far as Fort Churchill, sir."

"You do not know that area very well then?"

"No sir."

"I am transferring someone to Chesterfield Inlet, but he must be a man who knows that country. Sailors are deserting their ships in Hudson Bay and making their way into the fur country around northern Quebec and Southampton Island. But you do know the Herschel Island district."

"Yes sir. I've traveled a great deal of that country."

"Yes, and I recall the time you risked your life mushing three hundred miles to get to the wireless station to summon aid for young Fay when he was supposed to be dying."

Carter made no reply to this.

"There will be a change there this summer. Another Inspector will be transferred there and if you desire, I will see that you are sent back, if you care to make a written application for the post."

"Thank you, sir."

"Staff Sergeant Moorehead who was an instructor here before, will report tomorrow for his old assignment at headquarters. As soon as he reports, you will report for duty at Edmonton."

"Thank you, sir."

"I believe Inspector Brooks wants you to ride the border. The United States Border Rangers are having a little difficulty with criminals on their side of the line and we want to prevent any trouble on our side. You ought to be able to co-operate with the United States Government police."

"I am sure I can, sir."

"That's settled then. Good luck. Remember, I don't want any more reports of you being shot or beaten up."

"I never did relish those things, sir, but I also remember what is expected of us."

"Good-by, Sergeant."

"Good-by, sir." And Carter clicked his heels and gave the Adjutant a snappy salute and strode from the office.

Three days later Carter was back at his old headquarters at Edmonton, had reported for duty, and was assigned to the border patrol.

"I'm going to let you choose your own man, Sergeant. Have you any preference as to whom you want to accompany you?"

"If it's all the same, Inspector, I would like to have Corporal Hughes."

"Humph. Two of a kind. Getting shot and beaten up is getting to be a habit with both of you. Inform

Corporal Hughes I would like to have a talk with him, and you might let him know you requested him."

"I will, sir."

Carter strode from the room as if walking on air. Patrolling the border! What a life, out in the open twenty-four hours a day when weather would permit, a little hunting, comfortable shacks here and there to rest in, and Corporal Hughes, his friend, as a partner!

"Where away, Sarge?" a cheery voice called as Carter reached the stables where he expected to find Hughes.

"Looking for you, old pal," was the reply.

"You look so happy, there must be good news of some kind."

"There is, Hughes. What is the best assignment besides the Far North?"

"Border patrol. Say, I'd rather ride the border than do anything else. Why do you ask?"

"I'm going on that duty, you old muzzler."

"That's great, Sarge. I wish I could go with you."

"Go in and see the Inspector. He wants to have a talk with you and tell him that I asked you to ride the border with me and you accept it."

"Sure enough, Sarge? You're not fooling?"

"Not on your life. Hurry along, we want to get started in the morning." Carter didn't have a chance to say anything more. The young policeman ran to the office of the Inspector.

"Pardon, sir. Sergeant Carter said you wanted to

see me," said the policeman when he was ordered into the Inspector's office.

"Yes. Sit down. Did Carter tell you he had requested you to go on border duty with him?"

"Yes sir."

"Do you want that duty?"

"Yes sir."

"You and Carter will leave tomorrow morning."

"Thank you, sir."

"This is not an easy assignment. You will have long hours, you will be in the saddle day after day, in good weather and bad. If there is any trouble at all it will be serious, but I believe and hope, the life will be monotonous. I don't want any trouble along the border."

"I understand that, sir."

"That's all. I will see Sergeant Carter this evening and will give him final instructions."

"Yes sir," and with a salute, Corporal Hughes returned to the stable. Carter was not there and he did not see him until after Carter had his final conference with Inspector Brooks.

"What's the final word, Sarge?"

"Keep the border clean, and our first job is to burn the shack in Spencer's woods. And, the Inspector has a tip on Slater. Boy, if we could land that chap! We have so much on him that if he should ever get into the States, we'll never have a chance to prosecute, and if the States get him, they'll keep him chained up for life."

"Anything new on Slater?"

"Not a thing so far as I know, but I suspect there's something, because the Inspector said you were the one man who would know Slater without a question of a doubt, as you had seen him at close range."

"Sure, the day he shot me I got an eyeful."

"After supper we'll pack. We'll take the early train for Notukeu, and ride from there to Spencer. It's a long, mean trip."

"It is that. We change cars three times."

"Not this time, the Inspector agreed to let us take our own horses from here, so we'll travel in our own palace stockcar. How's that?"

"Fine, fine. Couldn't be better."

After supper the two men prepared for a long trip, and for a long patrol of the border until about the last of May, unless otherwise ordered, when Carter was to return to Edmonton for transfer to the assignment he wanted to return to, patrolling the Arctic.

The next morning a few good-by's were said, the two men reported to the Inspector, and then rode to the depot where a horse car was on the side track awaiting them. A half hour later the two policemen were on their way to the border.

The long ride ended, they unloaded at Notukeu, and rode in the direction of Spencer. A pack horse would arrive at Spencer within the next few days, together with supplies. Future supplies would be shipped from near-by detachments.

"What do you think about burning down that house in the woods, Sergeant?"

“Good idea, but we’re going to search it thoroughly first. The Inspector has something up his sleeve, I don’t know what. His final instructions were to be sure to see Mrs. Smythe. Remember, her husband was shot by Butch.”

“I should say I do.”

When after many long hours the men reached Spencer’s woods, they realized that the Inspector really did have “something up his sleeve.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE RETURN TO SPENCER'S WOODS

THERE'S the place, Corporal," said Carter, when after their long ride they reached the edge of Spencer's woods.

"I'll not forget this place in a hurry," replied Hughes.

"We'll ride around the outside of the woods before we have a look at the cabin. It's too bad there's so much snow on the ground."

"Right! If there should be anyone using the cabin, he'll be sure to see our tracks."

"And if there's anyone using the shack, we'll see his tracks, because a man can't stay in there long without going out for food."

"Let's get started. I want to get some rest."

"That goes for me too, Corporal."

The two Scarlet Riders rode from the road along the south side of the woods to the west side, then north along that side. When at the northwest corner of the woods, both men came to a stop. For there in the snow were the marks of shoes or boots and paces which had cut a path in the snow. It had been used many times during the past few days as the last snow fell but three days before.

"Someone's using the shack all right," said Carter.

"Looks like two men using it. There's one set of prints that look as if made by pacs, the other by boots or shoes."

"We're going into the woods and have a look at the occupants of the cabin."

Into the woods rode the two men. During the summer it would be impossible to ride far, because of the branching brush and the denseness of the trees, but in winter, with the trees stripped bare, it was easier. As they neared the cabin, they could smell smoke and soon they could see it curling from the chimney. The men halted, dismounted, tied their horses to trees, and then walked to the cabin and knocked on the door. There was no reply. But inside was some sort of excitement, there was a scuffling of feet and the policemen could easily hear the moving of some object, probably a piece of furniture.

Carter again knocked on the door, this time louder than before and a moment later the door was opened by a woman who said:

"Who are you and what do you want?"

"We are officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and are here to look over the premises."

"Come in, if you wish," said the woman, and the policemen entered.

"This house does not belong to you, yet you are occupying it. Will you please explain?" asked Carter.

"Yes, my son there on the bed is ill. We were

traveling through the country. My son was taken sick, and I was without money. We came into the woods to seek shelter from the storm, saw this cabin and have been here now for a month or more."

"I see, madam. And the name, please?"

"Wilson." The woman thought a moment before replying.

"What seems to be the trouble with your son?"

"I don't know. He's feverish a great deal of the time and cannot enjoy his food. I believe he has something wrong with his lungs."

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Wilson. Corporal, ride over to the farm north of here and phone the doctor in Spencer to come out here as soon as possible."

"Oh, I don't want a doctor." The woman was nervous.

"Never mind, it's no bother. All of our work is not tracking down criminals, we are supposed to render every aid possible to the people of the country. Get going, Corporal."

"All right, Sergeant," replied Hughes, and the policeman left the cabin and a moment later was on his way to the next farm down the road.

"Where do you come from, Mrs. Wilson?"

"Why, from the East."

"That covers a lot of the Dominion of Canada, Mrs. Wilson. Just what part of the East?"

"I've done nothing wrong, what right have you to question me?"

"I have every right in the world, madam. You are a stranger in this part of the country and living un-

der peculiar conditions. I must know where you come from and a few other things, and it is quite possible I may be able to help you. To get you to your relatives or friends, you know."

"We have no relatives or friends."

"That's too bad. Now, if you please, Mrs. Wilson, where do you come from?"

"Toronto."

"How long did you live there?"

"Several years."

"And where did you live there, what street?"

"Oh, why do you pester me so? I tell you I have done no wrong."

"Then why hesitate about answering my questions? If you have done no wrong, no harm can come to you."

"I won't be bothered by you." And then from the lad on the bed:

"That's what I say. If you have anything against us, arrest us. If you haven't, get out and stay out."

"Just let me handle this, Oscar."

"I hope you have no objections to me looking about a bit? You may be interested to know this cabin was once used by some notorious gangsters who have since been arrested and sentenced for their crimes, and I have orders to search this place and then burn it."

"Oh! What will we do then?"

"I will see to it that you have a suitable place for the time being and will help you locate someplace where you can live in greater comfort."

"But we want to stay here, we must." The woman talked as if she had suddenly realized something dire was about to beset her.

"We'll discuss that later. There's something new, that trap door in the floor. I can see the marks of the hinges even under the rug."

"It was here when we came."

"Yes? I'll just look around a bit. I'll not bother you in the least or disturb anything, except when I inspect what's under that trap door." For a few moments nothing was said. Carter was inspecting all he saw.

"Nice hat, Oscar. Oh, from the States, I see. Chicago. Been there recently?"

"No, I was never there. A man gave me that hat."

"And I see by the label in this coat, and your overcoat, they came from the States also. Man give you them, too?"

"Yes."

"And these cigarettes, they are from the States too. Same man give them to you?"

"Yes."

"Why," broke in Mrs. Wilson, "do you have to bother my son? He's ill I tell you."

"I'll direct my future questions to you, madam. I might suggest that for a sick boy, he smokes altogether too many cigarettes."

"So I have been telling him."

"How do you get your food, Mrs. Wilson?"

"My son or I go for it."

"When did you go last?"

"Yesterday."

"Mrs. Wilson, the Corporal who is with me, and I examined the marks in the snow leading from this cabin to outside the woods. There were no marks of a woman's shoe. There were only marks from footwear worn by men." Mrs. Wilson made no reply, but Carter noticed her face paled. The boy on the bed, who was about nineteen, raised himself a trifle on his elbow, then fell back on the pillow.

The pillow was a gunny sack and the mattress, three or four sacks filled with straw.

"I dislike very much to say it, Mrs. Wilson, but the stories you have told me do not hang together very well. I have the right to search these premises and intend to do so. I might say that I do not believe I have been told the truth about where you came from or how your son, if he is your son, obtained his hat and coat."

"Don't you say she lies," spoke up the boy hotly.

"I'll look around some more until the Corporal returns. By that time I'll have decided just what must be done." And Carter walked about the cabin examining whatever he saw, but found no further evidence to indicate there was anything wrong. When Corporal Hughes returned he said the doctor would be out in about an hour — that the roads were clear, and he would be able to come all the way in his car.

"All right, Corporal. We'll wait here until the doctor arrives. We may be of some assistance to him, especially if this boy has to be taken to a hospital.

Now, Mrs. Wilson, I'm going to examine what's under that trap door. Corporal, will you remove that rug and open the door."

Through the corners of his eyes, Carter noticed the boy and Mrs. Wilson exchange glances, and the woman put her fingers to her lips.

"In the meantime, Corporal, while I'm examining whatever this trap door leads to, see if you can find a pair of pacs to match the marks we saw in the snow."

Carter looked down when the door was opened and saw a hole about six feet deep, four feet wide and the same in width. There were several boxes in the hole, and Carter jumped down to examine them. Some were empty, one contained clothing, another revolvers and ammunition, a third small tin cans without labels. Carter opened one of these with the point of his knife and found it contained a narcotic.

No wonder Mrs. Wilson said she must remain in the house!

Carter stepped on two of the boxes and raised himself into the room above.

"Find anything, Sergeant?" asked Hughes.

"I did. Mrs. Wilson, what do you know about those boxes under the trap door?"

"Absolutely nothing. I swear I am innocent of all wrong."

"Do you mean to say that you have been here sometime and never looked under the trap door?"

"I opened the door once, saw there was something under it, and closed the door again."

"You didn't examine what was in the boxes?"

"No, I didn't."

"Very well, I can't dispute your word, madam, but it seems very odd anyone, you or your son, would come into the place to live and not examine the contents of the house."

"I tell you I don't know anything."

"The marks in the snow outside the woods and even inside among the trees show that two men made several trips during the past couple of days from this cabin to outside the woods. Who were these people?"

"My son and myself."

"And your son was sick?" There was no response.

"The odd thing about it madam is that the marks show that two men, not a woman, left them. One man wore boots or shoes and the other pacs. Corporal Hughes didn't find any pacs in here, so we can only come to the conclusion someone has been here you have not mentioned. Corporal, take one of those boots beside the bed and see how it matches the marks in the snow."

"All right, Sarge."

"Mrs. Wilson," said Carter after Hughes had gone outside, "I do not like bothering you or annoying you in any way. I never did like questioning or arresting women. I prefer to deal with men, but unless you give me a clear and honest account of why you are here, where you came from, and a few other things I want to know, it will be necessary for me

to arrest you, also your son unless he too gives an account that is an honest one."

Immediately son and mother started to talk, both at once. During this Hughes returned.

"This boot doesn't match the marks in the snow at all, Sergeant."

"I didn't think it would. Bring in something to eat. We might as well refresh ourselves while waiting for the doctor."

And then a long wait ensued, broken only by the cooking of bacon and the two policemen eating their meal, a share of which was refused by mother and son. At last the doctor arrived and he made a careful examination of the boy.

"Sound as a dollar, as far as I can see, madam," said the physician when the examination was completed. "Please let me know just what you thought was wrong."

"I think his lungs are affected and he doesn't enjoy his meals."

"There's nothing wrong with his lungs, and as far as not enjoying his meals, all he needs is exercise. Get him outside in the cold and snow, have him chop wood. Take away his cigarettes. He'll eat and eat plenty."

"Then there is absolutely nothing wrong, doctor?" from Carter.

"I don't say that, Sergeant," and mother and son gave each other a meaning look, "but all that is wrong is what we sometimes find in overindulgent mothers and lazy sons. I'll return to town."

"You may send the bill to our headquarters at Edmonton, doctor, and note on it that the visit was authorized by me."

"And your name, please?"

"Sergeant Bill Carter."

"Oh, glad to know you, Sergeant. You're the man who arrested that Blemmer fellow, the gangster, and helped break up his gang."

"That's right. And this is Corporal Hughes who helped and was shot by that escaped convict, Slater."

"Glad and proud to know you too."

When the doctor had gone, Carter tried to convince the woman it was to her own interest to be honest and answer his questions. She agreed, but stuck to her original story, except in a few cases, Carter noticed she did not say exactly what she had said in the first place.

"Corporal, ride over to the next farm. Take my horse with you and ask the farmer to loan you his car if he has one, and if not, a wagon with plenty of blankets and straw."

"Leave both horses there?"

"Yes, we'll pick one of them up as we drive the car to town if we decide to."

"All right, Sergeant."

"And before you leave here, take a branch of a tree and wipe out the marks of our horses' hoofs in the snow."

"It's as good as done, Carter," and the policeman left the cabin to obey his orders.

"I guess I might as well get up," said Oscar shortly after Hughes was heard riding away.

"Yes, young man," said Carter, "there's no use pretending any more."

"But regardless of what the doctor says, he's a very ill boy," said his mother.

The boy arose and put on his boots. Carter was amazed at the size of the lad when he stood up. He was muscular, tall, and although but about nineteen, well able to take care of himself and should be able to put up a good fight if need be.

"I'm going out to get some fresh air," he said.

"Not now," replied Carter, "when I go, you can go, not until then."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. It's getting dark. Better close the shutters of the windows and light a light."

The boy did as he was bid.

"We need some wood," the boy said after a long silence.

"There's enough for the short time you'll be here."

"What do you mean by that?" the mother put the question.

"Just this, Mrs. Wilson, that you and your son are leaving here for Spencer as soon as Corporal Hughes returns with a conveyance."

"You mean we are under arrest?"

"It amounts to practically the same thing, although in this case I am sending you to town

where you will be safe. There's likely to be fighting here tonight, or as soon as the two men who also live here return."

"I don't understand what you are talking about."

"I believe you will understand exactly what I mean if you think it over a few seconds," was Carter's cool reply.

"Say, you can't treat my mother and me like this."

"I'm not particularly interested in your mother and you, as yet; but I am interested in the men who have been walking from this house to outside the woods and back again several times during the past three days. I cannot get a satisfactory answer to my questions from either of you, so I'll get them from the men when they return."

A long silence followed this statement. A half hour or so later Hughes returned with an ancient automobile, but it had many miles left in it and would answer the purpose Carter wanted it for.

"And now, Mrs. Wilson, and you Oscar, be good enough to get on your warm clothes and go into town with the Corporal."

"I refuse to leave this cabin," replied the woman.

"And that goes for me too," said the son.

"Young man, I've no patience with you as long as you are so unwilling to co-operate with us. Hughes, put the irons on him. As for you, Mrs. Wilson, you are old enough to know I am acting in your best interest and I ask you go quietly with Corporal Hughes."

"I refuse to go."

"Lock the boy up in the town jail, Hughes, and return as soon as you can."

A few minutes later Hughes was on his way and Carter was alone in the little cabin with the woman. She tried in several ways to get Carter to permit her to open one of the window shutters, but Carter refused and the woman then started pacing up and down the little room. Carter believed if the shutters had been opened, she would have so arranged a lamp that it would be a signal to someone on the outside.

It was late. The moon had risen. Hughes had not returned and this worried Carter not a little. He should have returned at least two hours before. It was quiet in the little cabin and outside only an occasional low moan of the wind broke the silence, and then, of a sudden, Carter heard the soft crunching of snow. Someone was approaching the cabin. The woman heard it too. She sat erect in her chair, her face paled, she clasped and unclasped her hands in her nervous excitement. Then came a soft whistle. An odd whistle, a signal. Carter arose, and stood beside the door, and in a whisper said:

"If you value that man's life, act natural and do not give me away."

CHAPTER XVII

A VICTORY AND A DEFEAT

THE crunching of the snow drew closer, and louder. Finally it stopped and there was a knock on the door, one rap, a pause, then two raps and a pause, then three raps. A prearranged signal! The woman called, "Come in!" The color returned to her face, she was again acting normal.

"Say, ain't the old man here," said a gruff voice as the man entered the cabin. Mrs. Wilson closed the door.

"What do you mean, what old man?" asked Mrs. Wilson. Like a flash the man turned and saw Carter, standing with his revolver leveled at him.

"Clever, Mrs. Wilson," said the policeman, "I knew as soon as the man knocked on the door it was not the man you were especially interested in, most likely your husband. You know well enough who this man is."

"Say wat do youse want here anyway?" demanded the man.

"First I'll just relieve you of these revolvers and search you, then we'll have a quiet, friendly little talk."

"You can't do nothin' to me, I ain't done nothin'."

"That's all right, my man, so just start in and tell me all about yourself, why you're here and what you're carrying all these arms for."

Carter had found a third revolver under the man's vest, in a holster but besides that, and a quantity of money and tobacco, there was nothing to interest the policeman.

"I'll just put these steel bracelets on you — just like that — so you'll not get into mischief and I'm going to put this clean handkerchief in your mouth and tie it there. I have decided not to let you talk for a while. I don't like gags either, so I'll remove it as soon as I can."

"You're a monster," cried Mrs. Wilson.

"I've been called worse than that, madam. If you were a man instead of a woman you would get the same treatment. To me a criminal regardless of whether man or woman, deserves no pity, and if you cause any trouble, much as I would dislike to, I'll have to restrain you also."

"But what have we done that you should treat us so?"

"First you made misstatements to me, which shows you have something to cover up. You're afraid of something. Secondly, there's another man involved in this dope racket and I want him."

"You don't know what you're talking about. What other man?"

"I have an idea he's your husband."

"You coppers are all alike, dumb."

"Coppers did you say?"

"Yes, that's what I said."

"Mrs. Wilson, there's only one country in the world where a policeman is called a copper, and that's the United States, where your boy Oscar got his clothes and cigarettes, where you came from before coming to Spencer's woods."

"You lie! I was never in the United States!"

"Pardon my error, madam. I'll not repeat the statement, but I still believe you came from the United States."

"If only — "

"Yes?" asked Carter.

"You wouldn't understand."

"No, perhaps I wouldn't. But by the time the man wearing the pacs arrives, we may know a lot."

Except for a few meaningless remarks made from time to time the two remained silent. It was about midnight before there was a sound outside the cabin, and then Carter heard the crunching of the snow, and again, a low whistle. Then three raps on the door, just the reverse of those given by the first man. "Sh-h-h," said Carter, "if you give anything away this time it will mean shooting." Mrs. Wilson went to the door and opened it.

"What do you want?" asked the woman.

Immediately the door was slammed, and before Carter could reach it, a heavy padlock, that had been hanging beside the door on a chain, was snapped, its shank having been passed through a staple on the door frame and a hook in the door, by the woman known as Mrs. Wilson.

Carter ran to the window and threw open the shutter. Even in the moonlight he couldn't see the man who was running through the trees, but he could hear the crunching of his feet on the snow growing fainter and fainter. Carter went to the door, and tried to force it, but it was stout and it wouldn't budge. He demanded the key, but it was refused him. He placed the muzzle of his revolver close to the lock and fired — the lock splintered and a moment later the door was open and Carter was outside. He remained but a moment, yet in that brief interval, the gag was removed from the mouth of Carter's prisoner and the woman had taken a huge butcher knife from the drawer of the crude table, and was about to lunge at Carter when he turned — he grasped the woman's wrist, and squeezed it so hard she dropped the knife.

"Mrs. Wilson, you are conspiring with these men to prevent the due process of law. That is an offense that carries a heavy penalty."

Carter closed the door and sat down on the edge of the bed recently the resting place of Oscar. He was disgusted. He was sure the man who was warned and got away was the central figure in some major crime or racket in which dope played an important part. He believed he was the husband of the woman calling herself Mrs. Wilson, and that she, the man he had placed in irons, and the boy sent to Spencer jail were the tools of the escaped man, evidently the chief of the ring.

It was not until after two o'clock before Hughes returned.

"What kept you, Corporal?" asked the impatient Carter.

"First I lost nearly three hours in locating the constable. He was out in the country. Then the car froze up."

"Everything's against us today, Hughes. Sit down here. I want to discuss a few things with you." And Carter in a low voice told him all that had happened and gave his opinion as to the people.

"What'll we do about it?" Hughes put the question bluntly.

"As long as we're here, the man won't return, that's a cinch. I believe the best thing we can do is to get this man here to town, lock him up and return. Here's my plan," and Carter spoke now in a whisper.

"That sounds like a good plan, Carter. Let's get started."

"Mrs. Wilson," said Carter, "I'm taking this man to town where he'll be safe. I cannot take you or I would, I believe you understand that."

"Yes, I certainly do," said the woman emphatically.

"And we are going to search for the man who got away, and when we get him, we'll perhaps get the truth about what you people are doing here."

"You'll be surprised at your ignorance and suspicions when you have a talk with that man."

"Perhaps! Come on, Hughes. Take charge of that

man. We'll go over to the farm, leave the car, and get our horses. This man will have to ride a horse with one of us."

"I ain't agoin' to ride no hoss with another man."

"No?"

"No."

"Get going, Hughes." And the three men left the cabin and walked out of the woods and down the road, but when about halfway to the farmer's house, Carter left Hughes and going into the fields on the east side of the road started back toward the woods. He kept out of sight of anyone who might be watching, but when he was opposite the woods saw a man coming toward him, who then turned and walked the other way. So Carter ran across the road and into the woods, keeping behind the trees as much as possible and avoiding all open spaces. When he was close to the cabin, he stopped to listen. Instead of walking, he had been really shuffling his feet to avoid making the noise that could be so plainly heard in the stillness, the crunching of the snow.

Carter could hear movement inside the house. It sounded as if someone was moving furniture, but there was very little furniture to move, so, he concluded, whoever was inside must be moving the boxes he had seen under the trap door.

The Sergeant shuffled to the side of the cabin, beside the window on the north side and tried to see through the shutters. All he could see was a faint ray of light. Silently he shuffled to the other side, to the only other window, and here he was more for-

tunate. He was able to see inside the cabin — there was a crack in the shutter about a quarter of an inch wide. He saw that the woman was down in the hole in the floor and was placing the boxes that had been stored there up on the floor. In shoving them out of the way for the other boxes, she made the noise Carter had heard. He wanted to see if and how the door was fastened, but he couldn't do so. So he glided around the corner of the building to the door and noiselessly worked the latch. But when he put pressure against the door he found it had been fastened in some manner on the inside.

He was about to turn and move away from the building to some spot where he could watch, yet be out of sight, when a heavy blow felled him.

For a brief spell Carter was out of the picture, but brief as it was, it was long enough for a signal to be given to the woman to open the door, to relieve Carter of his revolvers, hog-tie him and drag him inside the cabin. When he came to, he looked up and saw the man and woman grinning at his plight.

"Well, copper," said the woman, "who's boss now?" Carter didn't answer.

"Well, well, well! If it isn't my old friend the Scarlet Rider, the guy who arrested Rusty Blemmer." And immediately Carter recognized (from descriptions and pictures in the police files) Dingy Slater, the escaped convict.

"Don't lose any time, Dingy. That other flatfoot may be back any minute." While the woman was

making this statement, the door opened and the other man entered.

"Oh, yeah? Say that copper ain't goin' to bother nobody for a long, long time."

"What happened?" From Slater. The man laughed heartily.

"I tripped him, an' as he fell, I fell on top and got his gat. I ain't worn handcuffs before fer nothin'."

"Where is he now?"

"Down and out on thuh nice cold ground in the field, an' it's only twenty below about." Again there was laughter.

"Well that's one break," said Mrs. Wilson, or at least, that was the name she used, "and now we can take our time."

"We ain't losing no time. We got to get out before someone finds that copper an' starts sumthin'!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson, "we ought to get away from here as soon as we can but how are we going to travel?"

"We ain't walkin' that's a cinch. We're goin' to ride in a car, and that car's waitin' for us on the Smythe farm."

The three criminals, for they were that, started to sort out what they wanted from what they didn't want to be bothered with. The guns and ammunition, box of dope, their clothing, was all they seemed to care about, until Mrs. Wilson remarked

she wanted one of the men to get her traveling bags. One man boosted the other up to the low ceiling, a board was lifted, an arm reached inside the hole made, and one by one the two bags were dragged into the open and dropped to the floor.

"Too bad you don't know what's inside these," said Mrs. Wilson to Carter.

Carter made no answer. His mind was too busy, thinking about Corporal Hughes, what his condition was and if he would come to in time to save himself from freezing. At last the men decided it was time for one of them to go in quest of the car on the Smythe farm. So the man whose name was still unmentioned, left the cabin. For a long time Slater and the woman mocked Carter, but he paid no attention to them and it was not long before they found there was no amusement in trying to tease a man who wasn't bothered by their taunts.

As a matter of fact, Carter was so busy figuring on what his next move should be, and thinking about Hughes that he heard scarcely a word the two had uttered.

It was perhaps half an hour after the man had left the cabin, before a noise was heard outside — the crunching of snow underfoot. The escaped criminal and the woman looked at each other. Soon there was a knock on the door, made exactly the same as the rap made when the first man entered the cabin, and Mrs. Wilson hastened to the door to open it. When she did, she saw it was indeed the man, but directly behind him was

Hughes, with blood frozen on his face, his right eye blackened. He was shivering with the cold.

"Up with your hands and keep them up," shouted Hughes, a revolver in his hand showing his willingness to see his orders were obeyed to the extent of shooting. Slater and Mrs. Wilson raised their arms, but in the next instant, Slater who was seated beside the table on which the lamp stood, knocked the table over with his knee. Immediately the room was in darkness. Fortunately, the lamp went out and there was no fire. It was too dark to see anything that was being done inside the cabin, but by the light of the moon, one could see the man and the policeman in the doorway. Mrs. Wilson stole close to the door, followed by Slater. The woman slammed the door, knocking the man in the grasp of Hughes, who was standing on the threshold, against Hughes and both fell to the ground. In no time, almost, Slater and Mrs. Wilson were outside the door, had knocked the revolver from the Corporal's hand and had helped the man to his feet.

Inside once again someone righted the table, picked up the lamp, wiped the leaking oil from it, and placed it on the table and lit it. The chimney had been broken, but another one took its place and the room was again lighted. Between kicks and cuffs, Hughes was tied up with rope.

"I'd like to kill the guy." This declaration was made by the nameless man.

"What for, Pete?" Mrs. Wilson put the question.

It was the first time the man's name had been mentioned.

"I was going after the car an' I saw somethin' crawlin' on the road, an' I went to see what 'twas, an' it was this Mountie. An' before I knew what was up, he tripped me an' had me down an' was beatin' me up."

"We'll wait now until daylight and go after the car," said Mrs. Wilson. "We might as well try to hire or buy the car instead of stealing it and having the loss reported."

"Say, how's that fer a smart wife?" Slater had at last given the information Carter wanted.

"You fool! Letting these policemen know who I am!"

"Well, what of it? Say, I know that copper, he's the guy I shot up near Lesser Slave Lake. Ha, ha, ha!" And the trio laughed merrily at the thought of capturing the one man who had actually seen the convict and could readily recognize him.

Hughes and Carter exchanged meaning glances from time to time. Because they had been tied, with their hands behind them, no fear of the policemen was felt by the criminals.

Mrs. Slater put wood on the fire and started to prepare breakfast.

Carter's hands had not been idle one second since he was tied, and while it was hard work, tedious work, little by little he was loosening the ropes that tied his hands behind him. Before the trio were ready to sit down to their breakfast, in

which the policemen didn't share, and were not asked to, Carter's hands were free. All that remained was to loosen his feet — and that wasn't as hard as it might seem. He was tied with one long rope, and when the rope that tied his hands was loose, it caused the rest of the rope to slacken. First he tried moving his feet a little, and he saw that the feet could be free whenever he felt it was the right and safe time to do so. Hughes was not so fortunate. He could not get his hands free. After breakfast, Pete set out for the Smythe farm to get a car, Slater went outside to bring in firewood. Mrs. Wilson's, or rather Mrs. Slater's back was turned to Carter, and he quickly freed his feet from the rope, and before the woman, who was but about two feet from Carter was aware anything was happening, she was grasped by the waist, a hand was pressed to her mouth, and she was tied hand and foot and gagged before she could make an outcry. When her husband opened the door, Carter was beside it, and as the criminal threw the door open wide, a piece of wood crashed on his head.

It was a matter of but a few minutes to tie the man up, free Hughes, and get back their firearms.

"Quite a night, Mr. Slater." Hughes was talking.

"Who you callin' Slater?"

"You! Slater, you and your wife have a nice long term ahead of you and I wouldn't be at all surprised if you were to hang."

Mrs. Slater screamed. Slater groaned.

"Some day people like you will be merely history. North America is going to be freed of gangsters and major criminals, and then the petty thieves. Between your 'G' men and our Scarlet Riders, we are going to make the two countries as safe as a Sunday-school picnic." Hughes smiled as Carter delivered the little speech.

"What about Pete, Carter?" Hughes was anxious to have this entire matter finished. He was tired and hungry. He was bruised and should have been in bed. But until the work was done, there would be no rest for anyone.

"We'll wait until he comes back, then get him. We'll use the car to get these people to the lockup in Spencer, then phone Edmonton for instructions."

"Can't we take them right in?"

"Not very well. Remember we are supposed to be riding the border at this very minute."

"Yes, and I wish we had been. I can hardly keep awake and my head feels like a ton of bricks."

"It won't be long now, Corporal. We'll take all the sleep there is out of two hotel beds as soon as we get to town."

There is an old saying, that "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." That saying applied to this case.

CHAPTER XVIII

OSCAR BREAKS JAIL

SAY constable, how about a coupla matches?" Oscar in his cell in the little Spencer jail had just been served his supper.

"Against the rules, young fella."

"Aw say, have a heart. I'm all alone in here. A coupla smokes an' it won't be so bad."

"Well, there's nothing to burn I guess, and I can let you have a little comfort."

"Yeah, that's the stuff an' say, how do I keep warm tonight?"

"I'll leave your cell door unlocked. You'll have to do your own firing. I'll get an extra blanket. It's goin' to be cold tonight."

"Say, you're all right, chief."

"And when you fire up, don't put too much coal on at a time, that stove is a good heater an' if you put on too big a fire it'll scorch yuh."

"I'll watch out."

"And don't poke the fire too often. I'll bring the blankets and some coal in a few minutes."

Oscar had been carefully looking at the walls, windows, and doors of the little jail. It was an old-fashioned affair that had housed but few prisoners,

mostly men arrested for fighting and the like, and was never a fortress by any means, although no one had ever escaped from it. But Oscar, who had served a term in the reform school, had learned a lot about jails from his friends there. He noticed that the bars over the windows were rusty, and especially one set of window bars that had evidently been rained upon for many years — they seemed to be rusted almost through. All, he thought, that would be needed to get those bars bent enough to allow him to get out would be a piece of iron, and now, the constable had promised him the very tool he wanted a shovel and perhaps a stove poker. He laughed to himself. Besides he knew where he could get a car. There was a small garage at the edge of town which he had passed two or three times, and he had seen a car inside through the large windows in the door. He could easily pick the lock. Oscar had been well trained along certain lines — not along the lines of honesty.

The constable returned after a while with coal, shovel, poker, and an extra blanket. The two said "good night," and as soon as Oscar heard the key turn in the outer door, he went to work. The window was on the side of the jail, and away from the street. I say the street; yet the business street of the town was really the only street in the whole village. Oscar walked out of his cell and looked at the poker. As usual, it was of soft material like most stove pokers, but the shovel was strong, with a strong handle. Oscar went to the window, stood

on top of the large coal scuttle, opened the window and using the shovel as a pry, put pressure on the bars. Two gave sufficiently to allow him to get his body through. Then he awaited the darkness. But it was almost daylight before noises on the street ceased. Again he mounted the coal scuttle, climbed to the window casing, and a minute later he was on the outside, stealing his way around the building.

Oscar wasn't prepared for a fight, and would have been easily captured if he had been seen, but he was not seen. He soon was at the edge of town, and with the aid of the stove poker he had brought with him, he managed to pull the staples out of the door of the garage he wanted to get the car from. It wasn't much of a job. Entering the garage, he lighted a match (given him by the constable) and looking at the gas gauge saw the car had about half a tank of gas. Plenty to get him to Spencer's woods and to a gas station. The car was backed out of the garage, the doors closed and Oscar was on his way to the woods without anyone in town being aware something out of the ordinary was going on.

As he passed the Smythe farm, Oscar saw someone in the road, and as he got alongside the man, recognized Pete. He stopped and Pete got in the car.

"What happened?" asked the surprised Pete.

"Broke jail an' got this bus. We're agoin' to beat these coppers yet."

"I came here to get a car. No one home, an' no car."

"How's everything in the cabin?"

"It's a cinch. We've got the coppers licked."

"Yeah, but we'd better keep moving."

"Sure an' now we've got a gas wagon we'll beat it right away."

It didn't take long to get to the woods, and leaving the car beside the road, Oscar and Pete walked to the cabin, expecting to find the two policemen tied up. So they were two very much surprised men when they opened the cabin door and found themselves looking down the barrels of four police service revolvers, each policeman holding two.

"Come right in, gentlemen," said Carter, who had stepped closer to the men as he spoke, "I've been awaiting this call with great pleasure."

Too astonished to move, it didn't take long for the two policemen to tie the men up.

"Corporal, go and see what kind of a car these men have."

When Hughes returned, he said there was room for the entire party to ride to town and take the evidence they wanted, including the two traveling bags, which as yet had not been examined.

"Take these things out to the car and turn it around. I'll follow as soon as you have taken out the last load."

"Then for a bit of hay," said Hughes. The tired man was spurred into action with the prospect of some much needed rest.

It took some little time to get all the boxes and bags together, and it was not an easy job carrying

them the distance from the cabin to the car, but the work was finished at last and then the two men marched their prisoners to the car. Carter returned to the cabin and set fire to it, then they started for town, stopping at the farm where Hughes got the two horses and followed the automobile.

Upon arriving in town, the policemen noticed there was some excitement, and found it was caused when the town constable discovered the prisoner had broken jail, and that prisoner had been placed in his care by a Scarlet Rider! He was ready to quit his post, and the townspeople were scared, believing Oscar was a most dangerous fellow. The prisoners were taken to the public garage, where they were watched by Hughes, while Carter returned the car to where it had been stolen, and telephoned Edmonton.

"Bring them in on the first train," were the orders, and so the next day, late in the afternoon, their horses in a stockcar attached to the regular passenger train, Carter and Hughes arrived back at headquarters with the prisoners.

It took a great deal of questioning to get at the bottom of the whole story, but as it came out, Mrs. Wilson was really Mrs. Slater and she with Oscar, who was not her son, had come to Canada to be with her husband and help him escape to South America. Her two bags contained sufficient money for that trip, but in crossing the border, at night and on foot, she came upon Pete Borgan, a friend of her husband's, whom she knew well from the

days when both were with the Rusty Blemmer gang. Pete had a lot of dope, and expected to make a small fortune in selling it to the Indians. He made a few sales to two or three white people, that was all. But in the examination, another name came into the case. Each of the four criminals were examined separately, that is, in different rooms at the same time, without however, the third degree, which is not permitted in the Force.

Telephone communication between the different rooms gave to the four examiners clues to work on, and by careful questioning, using statements made by another, the four prisoners were soon so tangled in their statements, it was not long before a true story was pieced together by the police. Then the four prisoners were taken into the office of the Inspector, where they were questioned in a body, by the Inspector, Sergeant Carter, and Corporal Hughes.

"You came to Canada for the express purpose of avenging a wrong, Slater?"

"Yes. I wasn't to blame for anything that happened when I was arrested. Blemmer was."

"And you, Mrs. Slater, you came here merely to be with your husband?"

"Yes. I love him. I knew he was wrong, but he is my husband and with the money, I had thought I could get him away from Canada and the United States, and he would go straight."

"But why did you work with this man Pete? Do you approve of dope peddling?"

"No, but he could help me with my husband. He could help us make a getaway."

"And this boy is not your son?"

"No, he is Oscar Blemmer's son. I pitied the boy, he never had a chance in life and I befriended him."

"A poor way of showing sympathy, taking a boy among criminals of the lowest type. What have you to say, Pete?"

"Nothin'. I ain't no talker. You got me an' that's that."

"Slater, in our previous examination you mentioned a man named Sarco Milan. You said he was operating a sort of clearinghouse in Canada for criminals in the United States."

"Yes, but he blackmailed us. We could get help when we needed it, but it cost plenty, an' when we quit payin' him, he threatened to turn us over to the police."

"Is that all you have to say about him?"

"He's also getting secrets on what the States an' Canada are doing an' selling the information to other countries."

"A very fine gentleman indeed," said the Inspector. "Where are his headquarters?"

"I don't know. All I know is that he's somewhere in this country an' has a guy named Flump, as his contact man. This fellow goes by the name of 'the Duke.'"

"And he was and is a friend of Rusty Blemmer's?" This came from Carter.

"That's right."

"Can't you give us any clue as to where we might find that man?"

"Yeah, he isn't far from Emerson or Portal."

"That's not much of a clue, but it's a start anyway." Carter was showing disappointment as he said this.

"I'm sorry," said Inspector Brooks, "that you people are in such a mess as you are. It's your own fault though, and of course we can't allow such people as you to be at large in Canada. You have given us some valuable information. Until your trials come up, we will try to treat you as kindly as we can, but you will be placed in cells where you cannot communicate with each other. Mrs. Slater will have every comfort possible and will be under the care of a woman who will at all times realize that until such a time as she is found guilty, she is entitled to the most considerate treatment."

The four prisoners were returned to their cells. The Inspector and Carter held a conference that lasted for hours.

"That man Blemmer was even worse than I thought possible," said Carter.

"Yes, and the further we delve into matters, the more we find that his activities extended far beyond his own gang."

"I suppose now Hughes and I will return to the border and make our patrol."

"No. I have ordered Sergeant Parker and Corporal Hutchens to that duty."

"And what are our orders?"

"I'll issue orders tonight at the latest, possibly before dinner time."

"Thank you, sir."

"With what we considered the entire Blemmer gang either executed or in jail for life, I believed, especially because things have been so quiet, that we were freed from gangsters and archcriminals, and now we find that there are two more men to get before the job is done."

"You mean Milan and Flump?"

"Exactly. Those men must be rounded up."

"Knowing where one man is, we can get him, and through him get the other man."

"It's a big stretch of country, that between Emerson and North Portal. We cannot go after those men with a large force, they no doubt have planned long ago what to do and how to escape to the United States in the event they became aware our police were after them."

"But the real reason they are in Canada is because they cannot safely return to the States."

"You are partly right. However, this is clear: they will let nothing stop them to prevent arrest; also, this man Flump, if what we have been told is true, travels back and forth between Canada and the United States as a contact man for Milan."

"That's right and I believe we were told the truth."

"First we must stop Milan's activities by getting Flump, and then get Milan himself. Bah, such men, it's bad enough to be an ally of criminals, but to accept the hospitality of a country and then sell its secrets to foreign powers!"

"Any display of force is likely to spoil everything, Inspector, I agree with you on that. There is one important thing we must not overlook." Carter spoke earnestly.

"And what is that Sergeant?"

"We must move enough men to the border between Emerson and North Portal to assure the capture of either of the men if they attempt to cross the border to the United States, and to capture Flump if he is in the States and crosses into Canada."

"You're right. And the first thing to do is to confer with Regina and have a stronger patrol placed at the border, and suggest to the Commissioner he confer with the United States officials to watch the border on their side more closely."

"It's only a matter of time before the men will be captured."

"I agree with that, but the longer they are on the loose, the more damage they will have a chance to do."

"There's no argument on that score."

"Better have dinner, Carter, and then return here. Think this matter over and see what you can suggest as to the quickest way in which to get these last two men."

"Are you sure, Inspector, that Milan and Flump are the last two?"

"From the arrests already made, and from what we have learned from the prisoners we have just investigated, I am sure that when we round up Milan and Flump, we have cleaned up the entire group of gangsters who are a menace to Canada and to every country on the globe."

"I hope you are right. I'll have supper and be back in half an hour, if you will be here."

"I'll be here, Sergeant."

Carter didn't eat much supper and for that matter, neither did the Inspector. Both were puzzled over the ever-increasing number of gangsters invading Canada, it seemed almost like an endless chain.

Both policemen, however, were convinced that once Milan and Flump were in custody, and the news of their capture made known to the world, both Canada and the United States would breathe easier.

At the appointed time, Carter reported to the Inspector in his office.

"Well, did you formulate a plan, Sergeant?"

"Yes sir. With a strong patrol along the border between Emerson and North Portal, preventing the crossing of anyone from either side, and with three of your ablest men, that is, veterans who have had long experience and can be relied upon to use good judgment, the capture can be effected soon."

"You say veterans. Why?" The Inspector put the

question to Carter with the idea of getting a clear reason.

"There isn't a Scarlet Rider who isn't willing to do all in his power at all times to get his man, but some of the men here have had very little actual police experience and I believe they should not be expected to work on such a case as this."

"Granted. What else?"

"It will be necessary to comb the entire area north of where the border patrol will be intensified, for a considerable distance. And, I believe the man we are looking for, this man Milan, the leader, will be captured after we get Flump."

"Agreed. First we will cut off the source of information, then through that man, trace Milan."

"That's my opinion. And, when we find Milan, I feel very sure we will find a man living in ease, without any apparent means of livelihood, and one looked up to in his community. A man who makes a show of being charitable, and trying to be what they call in the States a 'big shot.' "

"Are you a mind reader?" asked the Inspector with a chuckle.

"I sometimes wish I were." And Carter meant it.

"You have exactly the same opinion I have, but you have failed to mention one important thing, and that is that whoever undertakes this assignment must not rely on assistance from any member of the Force. He must work in civilian clothes and keep away from uniformed police, city, provincial, or our own."

"Yes sir, I agree with you."

"It is going to be a dangerous job and one that will require taking one's life in his hands, perhaps working absolutely alone, for don't forget this, Milan is sure to be a dangerous man, who will not sell his life or freedom easily."

"Perhaps he will not be as hard as we think."

"Carter, from the little we have heard, I am positive that man will shoot to kill as easily as winking an eye."

"Perhaps."

"Sergeant Carter, you have risked your life a great many times in the line of duty. Do you want to do it again?"

"Why not? A policeman must expect that."

"Very well. I want you to get the last two men. Who do you want to go with you on this dangerous assignment?"

"If Corporal Hughes and Constable Dawson will volunteer, I'd like them, sir."

"As you wish. I'll see them at once. Get ready to leave on this evening's train. Wear civilian clothes."

"Thank you, sir."

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAST TWO MEN

WHAT'S the news, Duke?" "I haven't had it confirmed yet, Mr. Milan, but I understand that Mr. and Mrs. Slater, Oscar Blemmer, junior, and Pete the Dope, are arrested and in the Mounted Police jail in Edmonton."

"Another source of revenue gone. Flump, we need some new recruits, you and I can't live forever on our present income. Between these Mounties and the 'G' men the pickings are getting too small."

"Sure, but what can I do?" Flump didn't like the way his chief spoke, his tone was threatening.

This conversation took place in a neat little house in a small town, just after dark one evening. Flump's orders were to never enter the house without making his presence known by a direct telephone call to Milan, not to be seen any more than could be helped, and to never enter the house during the daytime. Flump had one sure (so he thought) route to get back and forth between the United States and Canada. He made the trips across the border so often, he felt certain he would

never be caught, but if he were, he never had any evidence on him that would show just what his business was, or who he was.

Sarco Milan was known in the town as Jack Brogue, a retired merchant, who had plenty of money, and could afford to be charitable to his fellow townsmen. He was known as a man who could be depended upon at all times to relieve the distressed, although in later days, it was recalled that whenever he did anything for someone else, there were plenty of witnesses. His deeds were always a matter to be displayed before the public. He had purchased the home years before, and told the townspeople he sought peace and quiet.

His home was visited by all classes of people, but not often did they get beyond the spacious living room. It was considered quite an honor when once or twice a year the important personages of the town, mayor, the larger business people and the like, were invited to dinner at the Milan home, presided over by a single man servant, who performed all the work, including that of cook.

"I tell you, Flump, with the unsettled conditions in Europe, and the possibility of a crisis that will involve the whole world, we must get something worth while to offer the European countries. This dope racket is getting to be too dangerous and it's unprofitable."

"Why unprofitable? We always made plenty of money on it."

"Not any more. The people are being educated

by the government, especially by the police, and the little petty stuff regarding the maneuvers of the army and navy, location of supplies and the like, that's not what our friends and customers abroad want. We must get something important."

"Wait until I come back from the States. I'll have something worth while."

"With the gangsters losing their grip and being caught, on both sides of the border, our income is being curtailed seriously. What can we do about that, Flump?"

"What about importing a couple of kidnapers and —"

"Say! That's what we need! A kidnaping!"

"That'll make money for us. If the kidnaping is carried out, and a ransom paid, we can get twenty or thirty thousand dollars. If it fails, we'll get the body snatchers back into the States and I can bleed them for their last dime, and if they don't pay —"

Both men laughed long and loud over that remark, as Flump moved his finger as if pulling a gun trigger.

"Did you learn anything about the movements of the Mounted Police, Flump?"

"Nothing in particular. Since Blemmer and his outfit were convicted, and now Slater is in jail they believe that there's nothing more to do, judging from the little movement among the members of the Force."

"Don't forget this, Flump. I've been here several years and I have never seen those men fail, once they

get orders to get a man, they get him! And when they are apparently inactive, it means that they are educating the people to train their children to be law-abiding citizens, why, in another five years if this keeps up we won't be able to find a decent crook in North America."

"And then what?"

"Listen, Flump. You kept your name, I changed mine when I came to Canada. As Sarco Milan, I was known throughout Europe and North America, but as Jacob Brogue I am known as an honest man, respected by all. When there's no more income for me, I'll leave this dead burg and go to Montreal, Toronto or some other lively town, and I'll have the good wishes and respect of all the local people. That'll make a nice bunch of references, eh, Duke?"

"Sure, an' I'll change my name and we'll —"

"Don't say 'we' Duke. I'll be on my own when that time comes and it won't be safe for you if you come to me or as much as write me."

"An' that's the thanks I get for all I've done for you!"

"Yeah! I've kept you in money. I've kept you so well you don't have to resort to robbery, killing, the hunting fear of being shadowed by the police, in return for information and being my personal representative! I am the one who should be given respect, not you! I am the one who has done things for you, not you for me! Don't believe for one moment I am going to have my peace of mind destroyed because of you, just a dumb ungrateful

crook!" Having eased himself of this tirade, Milan paced the floor a few minutes. Flump sat in silence. He was afraid of his master and knew that he would not hesitate to report him to the police in some underhanded manner, if at any time he wished to get him out of the way. That had been done before, to others, and there were men in the States who would not hesitate to put him on the spot because of his activities for Milan.

"Here's what I want, Flump. Two kidnapers. Two fearless men. I'll provide everything they need, money, hide-out, getaway. But they must not come here!"

"I'll cross the border tonight. You'll hear from me inside of the next six or seven days."

"And don't get men who are already wanted by the 'G' men for kidnaping. I want men who are not important enough yet for those guys to look for. Get me?"

"Yes, I know what you mean."

"Then get out! Report to me as soon as you can in the usual way. Get out!" And Flump, very much like a whipped dog, left his master and prepared to return across the border. When he had gone, Milan called his servant, an honest hard-working man who didn't know his master's true business.

"James, you have been with me a long time."

"Yes, Mr. Brogue, and I hope to be with you many years to come."

"That's what I wanted to hear. I'm going to give you a little vacation. Ten days or two weeks."

"But who will get your meals and the —"

"I'll look after that. How would you like to go to Toronto?"

"Fine, sir. I used to live there and still have relatives in Toronto."

"I'll pay all your expenses. I want you to look up a nice place there, a house something like this, with a yard, on a nice, quiet street. I intend to move to Toronto."

"Oh, that is fine, sir!"

"I am a stranger there, and of course the people will want to know something about me. I suppose you know what to say? That is, I believe you will be able to satisfy the landlord and others I am a respectable citizen?"

"Indeed yes, sir. I have nothing but the best to say, sir. And they can always refer to the people here."

"That's right. I'm supposed to go to the bazaar tonight, but I have some writing to do. Take this two hundred dollars and go to the hall. Give this money to the chairlady."

"Yes sir."

"It might be just as well if you give it when there are people about her. I don't care for publicity, but it is a good idea for people to know that they have the support of their fellow citizens in matters such as this, which is to raise money for the poor."

"I quite agree, sir."

"And don't say anything to anyone we are to

move to Toronto. I will give out the information at the proper time."

"I'll remember, sir," said the faithful James.

Milan was shrewd. He had hired James, a most respectable man, more for the prestige of having someone who was respectable than for any other reason. He had carefully guarded his secrets. Flump's true character was never permitted to be known. During his visits, his conversation with the criminal was always held when and where there would be no opportunity for James to hear. Milan had made it known to James in a quiet way, that Flump was a boyhood chum, who had business that required considerable traveling, and because of their old friendliness, always stopped to see him. Flump had never stayed overnight in the little town.

From Milan's house, Flump set out to cross the border, and to take advantage of one particular spot he had long regarded as being unguarded. His success in crossing and recrossing the border was due to the timing of it, and always using that one spot which was rather hidden. If he had once seen anyone trying to get across, he would have sought out another spot. When again under the Stars and Stripes, the man took a train for the South, and contacted two men who were anxious to please Milan and at the same time make a nice sum of money. They dared not refuse Milan, for Flump was smart enough to select two men who were not only capable of doing the job at hand, but were under obligation to Milan, and whose records were

such that a threat of exposure to the police would keep them in line. This job completed, Flump made a few contacts for dope peddling, and got some army secrets from a paid spy and again set his face toward the Canadian border.

* * *

"How's the border, Hughes?" Carter, Hughes and Dawson, in civilian clothes had their first meeting in a week. They had gone from town to town looking for Sarco Milan. They had sought a man who was the idea of respectability, an outstanding citizen, and as often as one was found they investigated the man's past, but ever learning that the man was not the one they wanted.

"The border is being patrolled most thoroughly on both sides. It will take a clever man to get through."

"That's one thing in our favor. I wish we could make better time in our investigation though. We don't seem to be making any headway, except that we still have thirty or more towns that look as if they might harbor this Sarco Milan."

"Have you heard anything from the Inspector yet?"

"Not a word. I wrote him yesterday and told him I would be here at the hotel tomorrow and asked him to phone me before noon if he had anything important to talk to me about."

"Want us to wait here?" asked Hughes.

"Yes, you and Dawson had better wait here, too. There's no telling what might develop."

"Understand," said Dawson, "there's a spot along the border that's never been used in getting across. Look, here on the map. Yeah, that's the place."

"Say," cried Hughes, "I know that spot, that's patrolled by one of the best man hunters on the force, Blythe."

"That's all right, Hughes," said Carter, "but remember, one man can't be everywhere at once. In order to completely watch the border, it would take a force three times as large as ours, and they would do nothing else."

"Well, let's get a little something to eat and take in a picture or do something for a change. All of us have been working so constantly on this case we're getting loggy." Dawson was certainly right in this.

"Come on boys, my treat," said Carter, and a few minutes later the three tired policemen were in a restaurant ordering their meals. Later they took in a motion-picture show, then to bed for the first real rest they had had in days. They were up early, however, and one by one set out on their case, with orders to return at ten o'clock. Carter reached the hotel first and was told by the hotel clerk to call long distance. The call was put through, and in a few minutes Carter and his chief were talking.

"Any results yet, Carter?"

"None, Inspector Brooks, but I am positive the

man we are seeking is not in any of the towns we have visited."

"Keep at it. I'm sure you're on the right track. Now here's a bit of news for you. Last night the border patrol captured a man trying to cross over and he's being taken to Regina. Sergeant Blythe made the arrest and he's positive he recalls the man from police posters and that he's wanted in the United States."

"Does he remember who the man is?"

"Yes, that is, he remembers he was known as 'the Duke,' but can't remember his real name."

"But there have been a number of men called 'the Duke,' Inspector."

"Yes, I know, but that's at least something to start on. Phone me again tomorrow night. I may have something for you then."

"Okay, Inspector," and Carter hung up. He conveyed the information to Hughes and Dawson, and shortly thereafter they set out on their duties, each one going to a different town seeking some clue of Milan.

Carter's next town was Edgemore. It took the train nearly two hours to get there, and he didn't have much time to look the town over before dark, as it was, however, by a little questioning he managed to learn that in Edgemore, as in every other town, there was a man who was looked upon as being the town's leading citizen.

"I'm interested in a program of promoting the

welfare of the ex-service men. Have you many veterans in town?"

"Oh, yes," replied the hotel manager to Carter's inquiry, "and a few of them are permanently disabled."

"How do you care for them?"

"Oh, the government looks after them. But there are things that the government cannot do, such as providing entertainment and certain luxuries that their neighbors have."

"Then so far as this town is concerned we can't do much for them."

"No, they are well taken care of." Carter knew that, because that was the case throughout the Dominion.

"Just the same, I believe we should see that the people of the town from time to time make some special effort for these men, they are entitled to everything money can buy, that is, within reason."

"I agree with you."

"The program we have is one that keeps the money in the community in which it is raised. Why in one town I know of, the citizens erected a clubhouse for the Army and Navy Veterans' Association and the Great War Veterans, and they have a hall for use of the community at the same time that they provide a permanent home for the associations."

"Say, I know just the man you could interest in that. His name's Brogue, Jacob Brogue. He's a most

liberal man. Of course, and this is confidential, he likes to have his name used in whatever he does, but he's liberal as can be. Just the other night he gave two hundred dollars to the bazaar we had for the poor of the town."

"Well, that is indeed welcome news. And where can I find the gentleman?"

"I presume you will find him at home this time of night. His servant is on a vacation, so he may be here for his meals, or he may go to the restaurant."

"Where does Mr. Brogue live?"

"Go up the street two squares, then turn left and walk two squares. It is the last house on the right side of the street."

"Thank you," said Carter, "I believe I'll call on the gentleman right now."

"No time like the present, young man."

Carter found the house, and he found Mr. Brogue in, but he didn't find him in very good humor.

"Oh, I can't be bothered. I've been so liberal of late I'm about broke, besides, I intend to move to the city and what I do won't be appreciated after I'm gone."

"That's your opinion, Mr. Brogue, not the opinion of those who referred you to me. They spoke very highly of your generosity."

"Very well. Will a hundred dollars do?"

"Nicely, but I merely want your promise. Later on, the local chairman will call on you. Just sign this pledge card, please."

"Humph, most of the people who call on me want the money right away, and often the money goes into their pockets. You seem to have an honest proposition all right."

"Yes, we have, Mr. Brogue," and that gentleman signed the card, which later was forwarded to Regina for scrutiny, as well as the description of the man. That was the procedure with every suspected man visited by the three policemen.

Carter was about to take his leave when the telephone bell rang; the phone was in an adjoining room. Carter could not catch all that was said by Brogue, because he talked in a low tone, but he noticed the man was greatly agitated. The little he heard was "don't come here," "when did they get him," and "I'm not interested now," "do it on your own responsibility," and then he hung up.

Carter didn't show any signs he noticed the nervousness of Mr. Brogue or that he had heard any of the conversation.

"I'll be going now, Mr. Brogue, and I thank you for your kindness."

"That's all right, all right. I have business to attend to, so I will thank you not to detain me longer."

"Good-by, sir."

"Good-by." With that Carter was out the door, and as soon as he reached the second corner, walked as fast as he could without attracting attention. When he arrived at the hotel he phoned Arlin and got in touch with Hughes, then Salem, and talked

with Dawson. It was about mealtime and they were at their hotels.

"Come to Edgemore at once. Meet me at the hotel. Don't lose any time and don't let expense stand in your way. Hire the fastest car you can get and pay whatever is asked to get you here."

An hour later the three men were seated in Carter's room at the hotel.

"Boys, I may be wrong. I've made many mistakes in the years I have been a policeman, but I feel sure, after what I have told you, that the man we are looking for is Jacob Brogue. Hughes, go as close to his house as you can without being seen and shadow him. Dawson will be at the corner two blocks away. I will be in front of the hotel here with a fast automobile. If I get a signal, according to the code we have worked out, I'll jump into the car and pick you up. If I get the other sign, I'll go to the depot to nab him. The train leaves at ten forty-five. Don't use your flashlights more than is absolutely necessary. If you do it may cause some townsman to get some idea there's a gang of crooks in town and spoil our game."

"I'm off for the Brogue residence, Carter."

"I'll be at the corner awaiting a signal to flash to you," said Dawson.

"And I'll be out in front waiting," said Carter.

With this the men went to work.

CHAPTER XX

AN IMPORTANT ARREST

THE evening train was reported as being two hours late. If Carter was right, that meant that Brogue could not get out of town, if he wanted to, except by automobile. For a long time he sat in front of the hotel, his eyes fairly glued on the spot where Dawson was supposed to be. He had almost given up hope of anything being done by Brogue until morning at least, when he saw a short flash of the blue bulb of Dawson's flashlight. Carter arose from his chair and walked in the direction of the signal. He walked slowly so as not to attract the attention of the few people on the street. When he reached Dawson, that policeman said simply, "left his post." Carter walked on toward Brogue's home. He could see the dark form of Hughes standing against the west side of the house, the side that was next to the open country.

Keeping as much in the dark as possible, Carter crossed the road and joined Hughes.

"Packing," was the simple statement.

"Anything else? Anyone here?"

"No. Couple of phone calls. Made two."

"All right. I'll stay here for the present. Train two hours late."

It was easy to hear Brogue move about inside the house, and through a small slit in the shade drawn over the window the policemen could watch his actions. He was packing three grips, and was losing no time. Once he went to the phone and called the depot. "How is the train now? Oh, still two hours late. Does the train stop at Bingham? Oh, it does. Thank you." Bingham was the next station. It would seem as if Brogue intended to drive to Bingham and take the train from there, perhaps during his wait he considered it wise not to be seen leaving Edgemore.

"Hughes, wait here. I'm going to try to get inside that man's room."

"What have you got to go on?"

"Plenty, and I'm going to throw a bluff." Carter walked to the front door and rang the bell. There was no answer. Then Carter used a skeleton key and quietly opened the door and stepped inside. He walked into the living room without his presence being made known to the man, who had his back toward the policeman.

"Sarco Milan, put up your hands."

Brogue put up his hands and turned. Seeing Carter, the man who that day had asked him to help the veterans, he said:

"What is the meaning of this?"

"Mr. Milan, I am Sergeant Carter of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I arrest you in the name

of the King for being an accessory before and after the fact of dope peddling and harboring fugitives from justice. I caution you that any statement you make may be used as evidence against you."

"Well, that is interesting. My name happens to be Brogue, Jacob Brogue."

"Yes, that's one name. It would be to your best interest Mr. Milan, to come with me quietly. I have two men with me and there is no opportunity for you to escape."

"Where do you wish to take me?"

"As soon as your property is searched, I will take you to Regina."

"You are making a sad mistake my man, better think twice before you do anything. I may have some very influential friends."

"I'll take that chance," said Carter, and he made a sign to Hughes watching through the shade, and when he appeared, said:

"Keep your eye on this man and don't let him move from where he is now. Did you signal Dawson?"

"Yes, I did, Sergeant."

"I'll start upstairs. Have Dawson search from the front of this floor to the kitchen."

"Okay."

Carter was thorough in his search but found nothing on the upper floor and he joined Dawson before he had scarcely started investigating. Little was found on the first floor, and nothing in the basement, so the policemen returned to Milan and

took his keys from him and opened every desk drawer. Still nothing, and then they found a large safe concealed behind clothes in a closet.

"This old box will be hard to open." Dawson didn't like the idea of trying to open a safe in the first place and knew nothing about it in the second place.

"Let me show you something. I arrested a bank robber once and he became quite a friend. Taught me how to work a combination from hearing the tumblers as the dial was being turned. Hold the light so I can watch the numbers."

"Why not ask Milan to give the combination?"

"He'd never give it. Let me alone until I finish this, and don't make any noise."

It required some time for the police Sergeant to work that combination; time after time he spun the dial and started all over again, and then he discovered that instead of being the ordinary three-number combination he had learned on, it was a four-number combination. Ten minutes later the safe was open.

"Now let's see what's in here."

In the meantime Milan showed signs of fight and, evidently realizing Hughes would not shoot him, tried to force him to the wall, and thence into the front room. Dawson went to the assistance of Hughes.

A few minutes later Carter came out from the closet with his arms filled with papers. He went into

the closet again, and again, before he had all the papers and money laid on the table.

"See what's in those bags, Hughes." Carter issued the order in a terse tone as he glanced at his watch. It would not be long before the train Brogue wanted to catch would be arriving, and he wanted to be at the depot to see who got off — perhaps someone he would be interested in, perhaps one of the men who had telephoned to Milan during the afternoon. The examination of the many papers from the safe took some time and were found to contain valuable information, names and addresses, of a great number of criminals. There was more than fifty thousand dollars in cash and bank books showing deposits in several banks in the East and all but one in a name other than Brogue.

"Pack all of these and hurry, I want to be at the depot when the train gets in and I —" The sentence was interrupted by a train whistle sounding shrilly.

"Too late, but that's all right. There's another big bag in the closet, get it down."

In a few minutes the papers, money, and Brogue's revolvers and ammunition were packed and Carter telephoned to the hotel to have the automobile he had hired sent out.

The car had scarcely arrived before the doorbell rang. Carter had the two policemen take their prisoner into the kitchen, together with the bags, before he answered the call to the door.

The door was opened and two men entered. The

first man said, "Must we be kept waiting? Where is the Chief?"

"In the other room."

"We're the men who phoned today and came because we don't like stalling. We're men of action."

"This way, please," and Carter led the way to the kitchen door and stood aside to let the men pass, then with revolver drawn followed the men into the room.

"Say what is this?"

"Gentlemen you are under arrest," said Carter. "We are members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police."

The newcomers wheeled around, then took a menacing step toward Milan. "So we have been tricked, double-crossed. Well, Milan, it will be your last." One of the men reached for his gun pocket, but Carter was too swift and both men were disarmed and placed in handcuffs.

The three criminals were marched into the living room and Carter telephoned Edmonton.

"Hello, Inspector Brooks. This is Carter. I have the last man and two thrown in for good measure. We will leave at four o'clock for Regina and take the two other men whom we are holding for illegal entrance into the country."

When the next train for Regina pulled out of Edgemore, the policemen and their prisoners were aboard, but not before a near riot was caused by the appearance of Brogue under arrest. He had been looked upon as a model citizen and it was a great

shock to the townsfolk when they saw him handcuffed to a policeman and learned he was a man with a long criminal record.

Regina — the home of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Regina, where so many policemen had received their training, including Carter, Hughes, and Dawson. It was indeed a thrill to these men, when they were met at the depot by several Scarlet Riders and a large wagon, to take their prisoners to the Commissioner's office. In the meantime, during the journey, the policemen had learned enough from the criminals to know they had nipped a kidnapping in the bud.

"Sergeant Carter to see you Commissioner," said Inspector Payne.

"Got another prisoner for us?"

"Three, sir."

"Three? Why, who are the other two?"

"Carter can best tell you that himself, Commissioner."

"Send him in, Inspector." A moment later Carter was in the office.

"Good morning, Sergeant." The words were clear, decisive.

"Good morning, sir. I beg to report the arrival of Corporal Hughes, Constable Dawson, and myself with three prisoners."

"And who are the prisoners?"

"Two prisoners whose identity we have not learned as yet, but who came into Canada for the purpose of kidnapping."

"Kidnaping?" cried the astonished Commissioner, "Why that's a crime never heard of in Canada."

"They were imported by my third prisoner, Jacob Brogue, alias Sarco Milan."

"Are you sure about him? I have reports from Washington saying he is the most unscrupulous criminal on record. He stops at nothing, is the brains of many gangsters, blackmails his own men, and levies tribute on any criminal he can get into his clutches."

"He has been positively identified, sir."

"Tell me all about it, Carter." And Carter told the entire story from the day he was ordered to patrol the border, telling it in the short, crisp sentences so characteristic of the man; never missing a point, but never once did he give any credit to himself but he did laud Corporal Hughes and Constable Dawson.

"A very fine piece of work," said the Commissioner when Carter had finished, "but I am not at all surprised. I remember you as a raw recruit, when I was an Inspector. You always have been alert, have used good judgment and have been fearless. We have many such men on the Force, but you have one quality that stands out."

"Thank you, sir."

"Many of our best policemen lack that one quality, namely, ability to handle men. You have shown time and again that you are able, Sergeant, and that you can direct your men to get the best

results, and consequently they like working under you."

"Thank you, sir."

"I understand from Inspector Brooks you would like to return to Herschel Island this summer."

"Yes sir."

"I have no objections to that. My opinion is that no man should remain there more than five or six years, though."

"Because of the North aging men so rapidly?"

"Yes, Sergeant, that is the reason. Inspector Brooks also informed me that Corporal Hughes hearing you wanted to return North, applied for northern duty. What do you think about that?"

"The Corporal is a most capable policeman and I have found him an excellent leader. He can handle men and can be relied upon in an emergency."

"Would you care to have him with you?"

"Yes sir."

"You will be here several days. Better get back in uniform and that applies also to Hughes and Dawson. In the meantime, you are relieved from all duties. It will be necessary to remain in Regina until we have come to a conclusion about your prisoners."

"Yes sir."

"I will telegraph Washington regarding your two unnamed prisoners, and as soon as we have checked on their activities in Canada, we will turn them over to the United States, if they want them, and if we

have no charge against them except illegal entry. Report to me at four o'clock this afternoon."

"Yes sir," and Carter left the office.

* * *

When Carter returned to the Commissioner's office that afternoon, he was still in civilian clothes.

"I am sorry, sir, but my uniforms are in Edmon-ton and I could not get them here to report in."

"That is immaterial, Sergeant, in view of what I wish to discuss with you. Inspector Brooks is with the Adjutant and when he is through there, the three of us have a little matter to discuss."

"Yes sir."

A few minutes later, Inspector Brooks entered the office, and the two old friends gave each other a hearty handshake.

"I understand you two gentlemen joined the Force on the same day, were sent on active duty the same day. Am I right?"

"That's right, Commissioner," said Brooks.

"I remember very well the early careers of you men. Both a little inclined to take too many risks, but after a while you calmed down a bit and became excellent policemen. There is not a mark against the record of either of you."

"Thank you, sir," said Carter and Brooks as if in one breath.

"Brooks forged ahead a little faster than you, Carter, for the simple reason that he had the

advantage of being on assignments that brought his work into prominence, long before you had the same chance."

"Inspector Brooks is an excellent officer, sir."

"Thank you," said Inspector Brooks with warmth.

"We have decided," continued the Commissioner, "to send you back to Herschel Island, and Corporal Hughes will go with you. His application for northern duty has been approved by both Inspector Brooks and myself, and you may so inform the Corporal."

"I will, sir."

"You are familiar with the work in the North as well as the work on the prairies. There has been little change at Herschel Island since you were there, with the exception of the addition of a small, powered schooner which will help with the work around the Delta and along the rivers."

"Yes sir."

"When you have completed your investigations and other work in concluding the case against the Blemmer gang and Sarco Milan and his outfit, you will return to Edmonton and be of such service as you can until the boats start down river in the summer."

"Yes sir."

"I believe that is about all there is to say, except that I am proud of the manner in which you have conducted yourself. I hope you will enjoy the work in the North as much as you believe you will. There

will be one or two changes in the Force at Herschel, there will be two men coming out. Hughes is to be promoted to Sergeant."

"I am very glad of that, sir."

"And there will be a new Inspector in charge. You know the man, and I am sure you can get along with him."

"May I ask who the new Inspector is, sir?"

"Of course. He is one of the most valuable men on the Force, Inspector William Carter."

CHAPTER XXI

INSPECTOR CARTER

HOW do you feel in the new uniform, Inspector Carter?" His friend Inspector Brooks eyed the tall, lithe, manly policeman who had on his Inspector's uniform for the first time. It was now a month following their visit to the Commissioner.

"First rate, Inspector, but I feel foolish when the boys salute me as we meet, especially those I have known for a long time."

"I believe in your case the men are saluting the man as well as the uniform, Carter. When I told them you had been promoted, every man of them shouted and cheered and told me how glad they were."

"Not a bad beginning."

"No. Here's a report that may interest you. The two men who were imported as kidnapers are each doing thirty years in a Federal Prison in the States, and when the judge sentenced Milan, he gave him fifteen years and an officer from the United States will be waiting for him when he leaves Stony Mountain penitentiary."

"Some day we are going to have no more criminals and you and I will spend our time darning

socks and knitting sweaters for the soldiers and sailors," remarked Carter after a pause.

"I hope so, Carter. We are trying hard enough to let the world know crime *does not pay*. As soon as we can have something for the young people to do, something to keep them busy, developing their bodies and their brains, the whole world will change."

"I agree with you."

When the first steamer went down river that season, it carried Sergeant Hughes and Inspector Carter.

The author's patrol boat was tied to the bank at Fort McPherson, as usual; we were making the first trip of the season and would await the arrival of the down-river steamer, get our freight and mail, and proceed to Herschel Island for a busy season during the two months of open navigation. The Inspector had sent the year-old powered schooner on to Fort Arctic Red River to meet the steamer to get our mail and bring it to us. This would save at least a day, and the first of the two mails a year would reach us that much sooner.

The winter mail had brought us news we didn't relish. The Inspector was being transferred to Edmonton, and a new Inspector was being sent to Herschel Island. We had the usual round of visits with the three white people at the Fort, and now at about midnight, the Inspector and I were sitting in the little office of the police detachment talking over the change in Inspectors.

"I hope it's someone who knows the North, Inspector," I said, and with reason. "Green" men in that vast Arctic wasteland are a source of worry to the police. Usually they try to do too much, they overestimate their strength and ability and dislike being told what to wear, what to eat, and the like. Having had plenty all their lives, men don't like being forced to go hungry for a few days and living off what they are able to shoot at twenty or more below zero, and they don't take kindly to the Arctic blizzards that visit us so often.

"So do I, Bill, but whoever it is, you may rest assured you'll have a fine man. By the time a man is promoted to Inspector he has all the rough edges taken off and has more respect for his fellow men."

"A fine compliment for yourself, Inspector," I said, and we laughed.

"Well, it can't be helped. I would have liked to stay on here, but orders are orders."

"Yes. As Adjutant Rich likes to say, 'orders are given to be obeyed, not disregarded or questioned.'"

"Some day you'll be going out, Bill. I can't understand how you have been kept here so long."

"Oh, they don't know I'm on the Force. Besides, what use would I be on the prairies?"

"This life does spoil a man for that duty if he remains here too long."

On and on we talked until too tired to remain awake any longer.

We were awakened by hearing the far-off whistle of the power schooner, and we turned over for

another few winks. It wouldn't reach McPherson for at least an hour. The Sergeant in charge of the speedy little craft would bring up the mail. We would sleep those last few minutes until then. We were sound asleep, when the door opened with a cheery:

"Hey you Scarlet Riders! Get up and hear the birds sing!"

"Any mail?" asked the Inspector without as much as opening his eyes.

"Sure a lot of it, some for you, too." At that both of us jumped to our feet, and imagine the surprise when I saw my old friend Carter — no longer Sergeant, but in the uniform of an Inspector!

"Hello Walrus," he called to me, "and how are you lazy bones," to the Inspector.

Well, the excitement was high then. Carter and I had been good friends as long as we had known each other, and the news that now he was an Inspector and in charge at Herschel Island was indeed welcome.

The down-river steamer came and went. We went through the usual performance of checking our freight, then loading the Herschel Island and other detachment freight on my boat.

When all was ready, and the steamer left for up river not to return for a year, and all touch with civilization was gone, Inspector Carter walked aboard as soon as the orders to sail were given.

"Cast off," I called, and the Indians on shore cast off the lines.

"Slow speed ahead," I called to the engineer. A few minutes later when we were under way, I posted the lookout, gave my orders to the pilot and then ordered:

"Full speed ahead," and I joined the Inspector in the cabin.

"I have a lot to tell you Bill, but you'd better see your mail first," said my old friend.

"Thanks," I said and soon I was deep in mail from home, and in a few orders from headquarters. By the time we reached the coast I was through with the mail.

"What's all the news, Inspector Carter?"

And then for two hours the Inspector told me of the outside world — and of many of the events recorded here, but without giving himself any praise. He told me of the important events of the world, all of which I wanted to hear — my first real contact in so long with anyone who could tell me what was happening.

"Well, my work is cut out for the summer. Hear anything about me going back to the prairies?"

"Yes, I understand that next year will positively be your last here."

"It will be hard for me to work on the prairies, Inspector."

"I know that, but you will get used to it the same as I did."

We had a fine run to the Island, and then the real work of the season started — down the coast to Coronation Gulf and as close to the Northwest

Passage as we could get. We made a trip to Banks Land and rescued a party marooned for two years; weather and ice conditions had prevented getting them off the previous year. Throughout the summer there was very little rest. When winter set in, and the two patrol boats were secured for the winter and protected against wind and cold and snow, I had my first real rest.

The Inspector and I were seated in the office one day, discussing some police work to be done, when Carter turned to me and said:

"Bill, did you ever see a crook have anything?"

"Sure I have."

"You have? What?" Carter spoke in astonishment.

"Black eyes and handcuffs."

"Oh, I don't mean anything like that. You know, I have arrested men who have stolen many thousands of dollars in their lives and who have made many thousands from rackets, but they never have anything."

"Yes, I've noticed that. Ill-gotten gains never do anyone any good."

"Blemmer, Slater, Milan, and many, many others have had thousands in their pockets not once but many times, and yet when they were caught they either didn't have a cent or the money was proved to belong to someone else and they had to give it up."

"In other words, crime does not pay."

"That's just what I mean. And here's where you fit into the story, Bill."

"Go on, old friend. I suppose you want me to steal a bunch of money and spend it."

"A simpler job than that, Bill. I know when you get back to the prairies you won't stay there long. You have been here too many years, so if you don't convince the Commissioner and Adjutant this is the place for you, you'll resign."

"That sounds plausible, Inspector."

"And I suppose you'll go back to the States to live."

"Quite likely, my mother is living there."

"Then don't quit the job you have been doing so many years, keep on impressing the people, especially young people, that dishonesty never got anyone anything but sorrow, and hardships; that it is much better being at hard work eight or ten hours a day, and have the remaining hours to oneself, with a regular pay day; that thousands of ill-gotten wealth cause misery, always hunted by fear of the police, and sooner or later a term in prison."

"That's just what I would do, Inspector, for the good of all youth."

The accounting of the lives and work of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police brings to prominence a great group of men who are striving to make this a better world and a better place to live. Guardians of the law are your guardians and all are your friends.

And so for now, I say *au revoir*, and trust that you have enjoyed this account of that fine body of men, clean of body and soul, fearless — the Scarlet Riders.

